Frommer's

IRREVERENT guide to Boston

5th Edition

By
Marie Morris



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

VISIT…



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INTRODUCTION

Boston has long had a problem with its signature. We're not talking handwriting analysis, mind you—which is just as well, with so many doctors around. We mean the camera angle that movie types call an establishing shot. You see the Eiffel Tower or the Statue of Liberty, and you know where the action is. The same goes for the Golden Gate Bridge, the Great Wall, the Sydney Opera House, and so on. In 2003, closer to its 400th anniversary than to its 300th, Boston finally got its signature: the Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge, a soaring structure that's the most visible result of the world-famous boondoggle known as the Big Dig.

Although it's a reminder of what we'll diplomatically call a hellish time (the Big Dig, a massive highway-construction project that wreaked havoc in downtown Boston, took 15 years and cost $14.6 billion), the Zakim Bridge is a gorgeous symbol of Boston. The biggest negative associated with it is traffic—a serious drawback, but most of the city's other calling cards have the insurmountable problem of not being instantaneously identifiable in our visually oriented, short-attention-span world. Consider:

Colleges

Chances are, if you have a preconceived notion of Boston, it's because someone you know (or maybe even you) went to college in the Boston area. Hundreds of thousands of students affect every aspect of life here, from traffic (good luck getting around Brighton when Boston College has a football game) to nightlife

(excellent despite ridiculously early closing times) to shopping (excellent in all price ranges, whether you have Daddy's gold card or the stipend from being a human lab rat) to property values (you'll really want that gold card now).

History

The first this, the original that, the oldest whatever...plaques all over town commemorate milestones and achievements and inventions (and even some actual milestones). They're interesting, but we find the city's abundant examples of living history even more fascinating. There's the Old North Church of "one if by land, two if by sea" fame, founded in 1723 and still an active congregation. Massachusetts Hall at Harvard was erected in 1720 and is home to an annual crop of freshmen as well as the university president's office. Two even older buildings survive as museums: the 1713 Old State House and the Paul Revere House, arranged as a residence and dating to around 1680. And then there's Boston Common, set aside in 1640 and in use ever since as everything from a cow pasture (Ralph Waldo Emerson dropped his mother's cattle off on the way to school) to a skating rink.

Sports

Yes, smarty, the Patriots keep winning the Super Bowl. They also keep their trophies—and cleats and stadium—in Foxboro, some 40 miles south of Boston. The Bruins and Celtics haven't done much since they moved into the FleetCenter and legendary Boston Garden was demolished (hmm). And then there are the famously star-crossed Red Sox, periodically missing the brass ring and breaking the hearts of their legions of loyal fans. Fenway Park, the oldest ballpark in the majors, was 6 years old when the Sox recorded their most recent (as of press time) World Series victory, in 1918.

Snobbery

The original "I'm named after an ancestor who came over on the *Mayflower*" snobbery almost sounds chummy compared to its contemporary spawn, intellectual snobbery. You can get in your daily ab workout by camping out in a cafe and trying not to laugh while you listen in on a pretentious discussion straight out of a graduate seminar in something esoteric or (even better) Psych 101.

Traffic

Of course there's traffic, you say. There's traffic everywhere. But downtown Boston is a perfect storm of traffic, with ridiculously

narrow one-way streets, severely limited parking, and wretched drivers. Pedestrians have a Darwinian advantage in this ecosystem—they were smart enough to walk. Part of the fun of walking around Boston is watching people give directions by pointing. They don't even say where to turn, they just point and tell you to ask someone else when you get to where they're pointing. Somehow, it works.

Cheers

This phenomenon started innocently enough and grew like something exposed to dangerous levels of radiation. The inspiration for the sitcom was a congenial neighborhood bar named the Bull & Finch (a tribute to the legendary Boston architect Charles Bulfinch). The day the first tourists showed up and demanded to have their pictures taken with the sign, it changed from a tavern into a phenomenon. Sure, it's a fun phenomenon, but c'mon. Bowing to the inevitable, the owner of the Bull & Finch changed the name to Cheers Beacon Hill and opened a branch at Faneuil Hall Marketplace that (unlike the original) looks exactly like the set of the TV show.

Ducklings

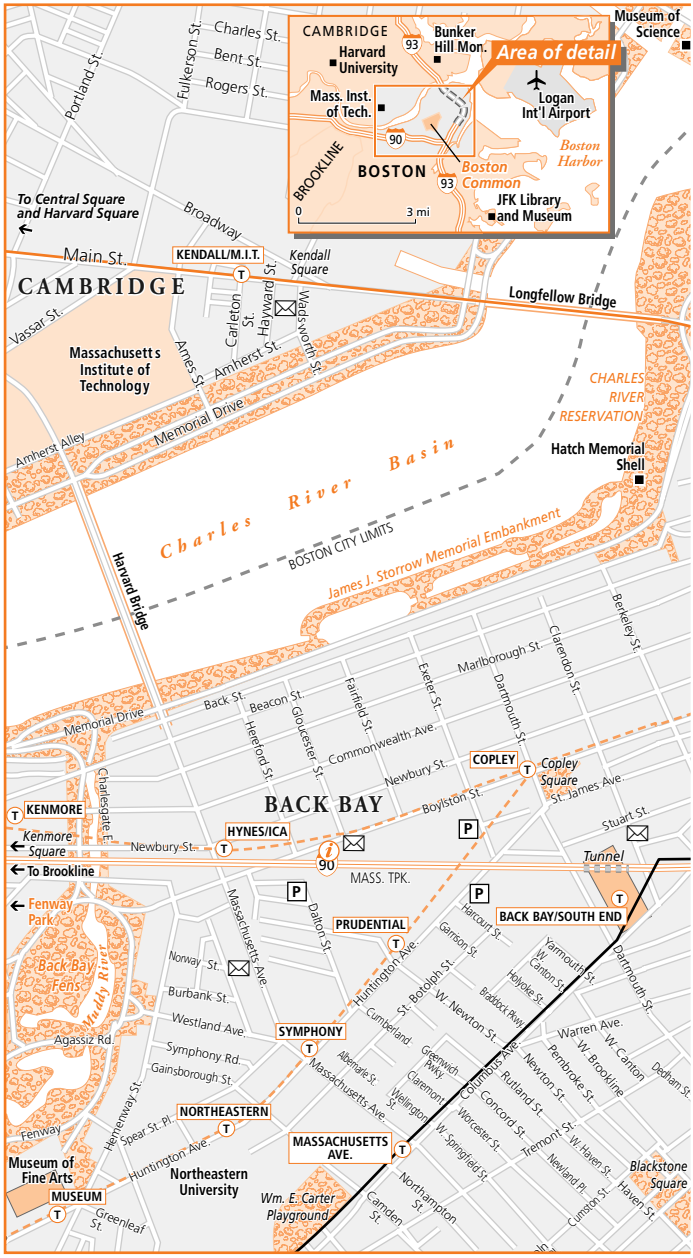
The adorable protagonists of the beloved children's book *Make Way for Ducklings* still live in Boston's Public Garden. Not in real life—bronze renderings of Mrs. Mallard and her eight babies traipse along a cobbled footpath, attracting kids the way an open bar attracts adults. They're in one of the city's loveliest places, not far from the lagoon where the beloved Swan Boats spend summer days describing lazy circles in the murky water.

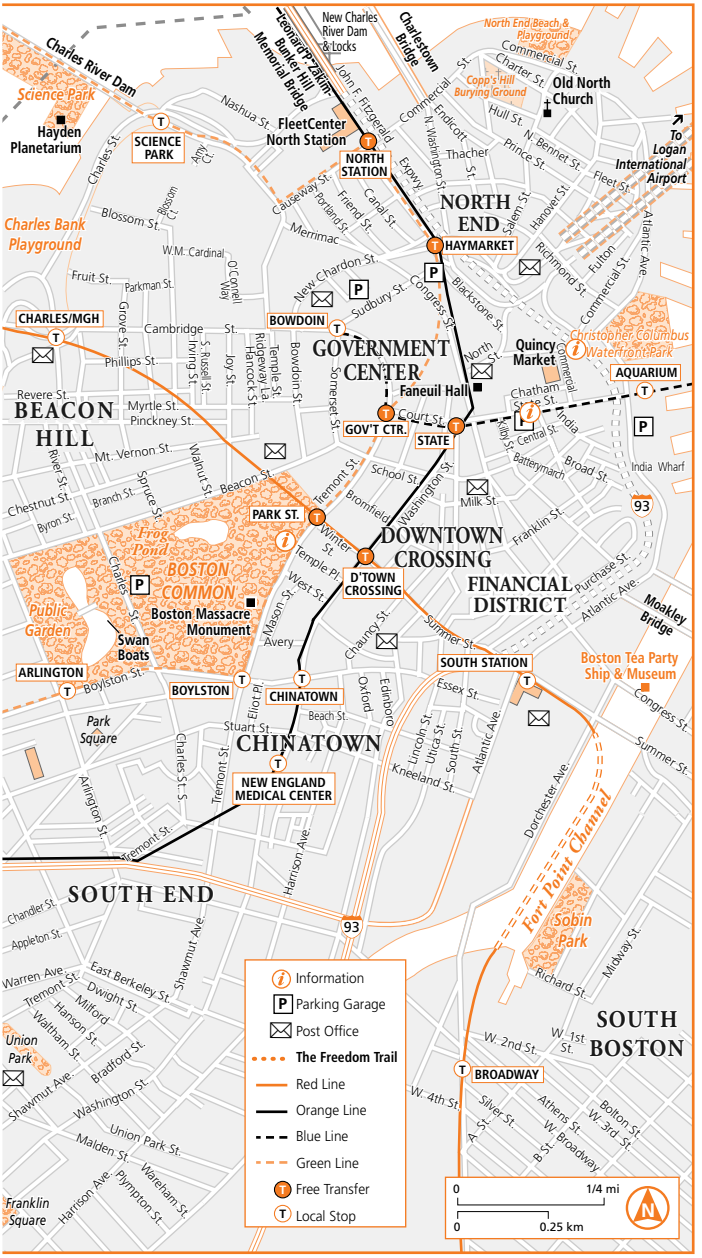
The Accent

We'll hold your hand—or hold a hand over your mouth—while you fight the urge to ask your cabdriver, waitress, or doctor to say "park the car in Harvard Yard." It's just plain rude (and you can't park in Harvard Yard). Besides, plenty of Bostonians sound like network anchors, with barely a hint of an accent. But sit tight and listen carefully. Eavesdrop if you have to, ask stupid questions just to keep the conversation going, and call home for a reality check if you start to go native and finding yourself dropping the letter *r*.

The bridge it is.

Map 1: Boston Neighborhoods




Charles River Dam
Science Park
Hayden Planetarium
SCIENCE PARK
Charles St.
Ally. Ct.
Nashua St.
Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge
New Charles River Dam & Locks
John F. Fitzgerald
FleetCenter North Station
NORTH STATION
Charlestown Bridge
Commercial St.
Endicott St.
N. Washington St.
Thacher St.
Prince St.
North End Beach & Playground
Copp's Hill Burying Ground
Old North Church
Hull St.
N. Bennet St.
Fleet St.
To Logan International Airport
Charles Bank Playground
Blossom St.
Boston St.
Causeway St.
Portland St.
Friend St.
Canal St.
Merrimac
Expwy
NORTH END
Salem St.
Hanover St.
HAYMARKET
Atlantic Ave.
Richmond St.
Fulton
Commercial St.
W.M. Cardinal
O'Connell Way
Fruit St.
Parkman St.
New Chardon St.
Sudbury St.
Congress St.
Blackstone St.
CHARLES/MGH
Cambridge St.
Grove St.
Phillips St.
BOWDOIN
GOVERNMENT CENTER
Quincy Market
Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park
AQUARIUM
Revere St.
Myrtle St.
Pinckney St.
BEACON HILL
Bowdoin St.
Somerset St.
Faneuil Hall
Chatham St.
India St.
GOV'T CTR.
Court St.
STATE
Central St.
Commercial St.
Mt. Vernon St.
River St.
Chestnut St.
Byron St.
Branch St.
Spruce St.
Walnut St.
Beacon St.
Tremont St.
School St.
Washington St.
Milk St.
Batterymarch
Broad St.
India Wharf
93
PARK ST.
Bromfield St.
Winter St.
DOWNTOWN CROSSING
Franklin St.
Temple Pl.
D'TOWN CROSSING
FINANCIAL DISTRICT
Purchase St.
Atlantic Ave.
Moakley Bridge
Frog Pond
BOSTON COMMON
Public Garden
Boston Massacre Monument
Swan Boats
West St.
Mason St.
Avery
Chauncy St.
Summer St.
Boston Tea Party Ship & Museum
ARLINGTON
Boylston St.
BOYLSTON
CHINATOWN
SOUTH STATION
Essex St.
Beach St.
Oxford
Edinboro
Lincoln St.
Utica St.
South St.
Kneeland St.
Atlantic Ave.
Congress St.
Summer St.
Park Square
Stuart St.
CHINATOWN
Charles St. S.
Tremont St.
NEW ENGLAND MEDICAL CENTER
Arlington St.
Tremont St.
Harrison Ave.
Dorchester Ave.
Fort Point Channel
SOUTH END
Chandler St.
Appleton St.
Shawmut Ave.
Warren Ave.
Tremont St.
East Berkeley St.
Dwight St.
Milford
Hanson St.
Waltham St.
Bradford St.
Union Park
Shawmut Ave.
Washington St.
Union Park St.
Malden St.
Worcester St.
Harrison Ave.
Plympton St.
Franklin Square
Sobin Park
Midway St.
Richard St.
SOUTH BOSTON
W. 1st St.
W. 2nd St.
BROADWAY
W. 4th St.
Silver St.
A St.
Athens St.
W. Broadway
Bolton St.
W. 3rd St.
B St.
Information
Parking Garage
Post Office
The Freedom Trail
Red Line
Orange Line
Blue Line
Green Line
Free Transfer
Local Stop
0
1/4 mi
0
0.25 km
N

YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW

Why it's called "the Hub"... It's mostly called the Hub in newspaper headlines—headline writers love short words. Nineteenth-century author Oliver Wendell Holmes referred to the Massachusetts State House as "the hub of the solar system," and Bostonians quickly took up and shortened the phrase. Holmes also came up with the term "Boston Brahmins" for members of the upper caste of local society, who over the years since have retained prestige and their seats at the symphony while losing power and money.

How to pronounce—well, lots of things... Say "Charlestown" (not Charleston), "*Pea*-b'dy" (not pea-body), "*Cop*-ley" (not Cope-ly), "*Quin*-zee" (not Quin-see), and "Faneuil" to rhyme with "Daniel." Don't even attempt "Haverhill," "Billerica," or "Leominster" unless you're moving to one of those suburbs. Don't ask anyone to say "park your car in Harvard Yard" unless you want your personal space violated. And try to control yourself when (true story)

a well-meaning convenience-store cashier with a thick Boston accent rings up a salad and tries to offer an alarmed tourist a fork.

How the T lines got their names... The Hub's seemingly mad subway system (known as the T) makes some sense if you follow the original planners' logic, though their color-coding is a bit of a stretch. The Red Line, which stretches from Alewife in Cambridge to Mattapan and Braintree, originally ended at Harvard Square, home of the Harvard Crimson. The Blue Line, which runs from Bowdoin (during weekday work hours) or Government Center (all other times) to Wonderland, travels between the Aquarium stop near Long Wharf and Maverick Square in East Boston in a tunnel underneath Boston Harbor—which is water, which is blue. The Green Line starts at Lechmere, across the Charles in Cambridge, and branches in four directions through Boston's lushly planted suburbs. Trees, green, get it? The Orange Line, which runs from Malden, north of the city, to Forest Hills, follows Washington Street for most of its route through Boston. In Colonial times, part of what's now Washington Street was Orange Street, after the ruling British House of Orange.

Which Green Line is which... There are four Green Lines—but downtown they're all the same. Between Government Center and Copley, all four lines cover the same route. Boston College (B) and Cleveland Circle (C) trains start at Government Center; Riverside (D) and Heath (E) cars originate at Lechmere. E trolleys diverge at Copley and head down Huntington Avenue, making stops at (among others) the Prudential Center, Symphony Hall, and the Museum of Fine Arts. After Kenmore Square, two stops past Copley, the B, C, and D spurs diverge. If you board an E car by accident, return to Arlington to get back on track—there's no free transfer between inbound and outbound at Copley.

Why your compass is going all kerflooey... No, you're not at one of Earth's magnetic poles—if you were, at least you'd be able to see where you were going. Your compass might be in a snit because it's almost purely decorative here—Bostonians almost never give directions of the "walk 3 blocks west" variety, but orient themselves (and you)

Traffic rules

Warning: Bostonians consider driving a blood sport. If you think Hub motorists are incompetent, oblivious, or borderline criminal (or all three), you're right. Here are the rules:

1. *Don't give away your strategy—never use turn signals.*
2. *Pass other cars on either side. Passing on the right is actually preferable because it carries the element of surprise (though not to other Boston drivers).*
3. *Rest one hand on the horn.*
4. *Wave the other angrily out the window.*
5. *Avoid eye contact and courtesy—you might lose. (Lose what? Nobody cares.)*

Here are the rules for Boston's undaunted pedestrians:

1. *Jaywalk.*
2. *Jaywalk fast.*
3. *Jaywalk en masse—it's safer.*

according to landmarks, including T stops. The elaborate filigree of downtown befuddles even longtime residents, many of whom cling to the persistent myth that the streets were laid out on cow paths. Stronger influences were property lines and geographical features that no longer exist—for instance, the original shoreline, before landfill pushed the city limits well into the harbor. (That explains the location of Water and Beach streets, both well inland.) You may want to kiss the ground of the Back Bay, where the designers had the nutty idea to introduce a grid pattern that even has alphabetical cross streets (Arlington to Hereford) from Beacon to Boylston streets. The alphabet continues on the other side of Massachusetts Avenue ("Mass. Ave.") with Ipswich, Jersey, and Kilmarnock, off the grid in the Fenway. And just to keep you on your toes, all but three Boston streets change names when they cross Washington Street—Winter turns into Summer, Boylston into Essex, and so forth. The only exceptions are Mass. Ave., Columbus Avenue, and Melnea Cass Boulevard. This phenomenon honors George Washington, and quite an honor it is—we've lost count of the times we've said, "If only the street named after us would make all the other streets change their names."

What's opera got to do with it... The swan is one of many traditional symbols of Boston. (The cod, the miserable graduate student, and the terrible driver are some others.) The association originated in the 1870s, when an entrepreneur named Robert Paget helped design a pedal-powered catamaran. To cover up the unattractive pedaling apparatus, he came up with the graceful swan design. It wasn't an original idea; he'd seen a swan boat in a production of the opera *Lohengrin.* Nearly 130 years later, the vessels are larger than the originals, but the Paget family still operates the Swan Boats on the Public Garden lagoon. Four real swans—Castor, Pollux, Romeo, and Juliet—also live in the lagoon. Like the Swan Boats, they go away for the winter and return every spring.

Where the hell you can park... In the hotel garage, silly. You don't need the car until it's time to head home. Your hotel doesn't have a garage? Do us a favor—give yourself a little smack. Then ask someone at the front desk for recommendations. If you don't like their suggestions (like paying $25 to park overnight in a garage), consider an unorthodox—okay, illegal—strategy. Most spots in Boston and Cambridge are metered, resident-only, or both. If you get a ticket, it might be cheaper than paying to park, but Boston recently hiked its lowest fine to $40; you can certainly park legally for less. (And if you rack up enough tickets, the Transportation Department will clamp a "Denver boot" on your car, and then you'll really be up a creek.) Or try a strategy that everyone thinks is their little secret—and remember that you didn't hear it from us. Two well-known enclaves of unmetered parking without resident restrictions or time limits are Columbus Avenue between West Newton Street and Mass. Ave. in Boston's South End, and Memorial Drive in Cambridge, near MIT. From Columbus Avenue, you can walk to the Back Bay or to the Orange Line (Back Bay or Mass. Ave. stop). From Mem Drive, jump on the Red Line at Kendall/MIT—or walk elsewhere in Cambridge or across the river to Boston (use the Mass. Ave. Bridge for the Back Bay, the Longfellow Bridge for Beacon Hill, or the Museum of Science Bridge for North Station and the North End). Walking from either place may be a hike, but it's cheaper than a day pass to a health club. And now ask yourself: Was driving really worth the money you saved on airfare?

Who serves the best ice cream... This is not a joking matter. Ice cream shops have cultish followings, and Bostonians are among the country's most voracious cone heads. We've done extensive fieldwork in the ice cream boutiques—oh, the sacrifice!—and awarded a narrow victory to the competitors on the Cambridge side of the river: Christina's (Inman Square), Herrell's (Harvard Square, with a branch in Brighton), and Toscanini's (Harvard and Central squares). That's not to dis Boston, the only place where you can still find the legendary Steve's (in Quincy Market). Visionary founder Steve Herrell helped create this niche in the '70s by introducing mix-ins like Heath Bars and Oreos to the masses. After selling Steve's, the guru opened Herrell's. Fellow superstars Ben & Jerry also have shops in Boston (Newbury Street, Prudential Center, Park Plaza) and Cambridge (Harvard Square), but for true local color, head to J.P. Licks. It draws families to Centre Street in Jamaica Plain (that's the J.P.), where an attractive plastic cow adorns the roof. The big names offer their ultrarich concoctions in plain and fancy flavors—debating the merits of sweet cream (a Herrell's specialty) vs. Guinness (at J.P. Licks) can be as contentious as the fight over which brand is the best. Try a cone from each of the contenders and decide for yourself. Summer or winter, it's a Boston tradition.

Where your tax money went... Into the ground and into the water. The Big Dig, which is still wrapping up, rerouted an entire interstate into a tunnel that runs beneath downtown. And the highway never closed! That's not to say it didn't cause any trouble, as millions of discombobulated drivers and pedestrians will attest. But with parts of the new configuration already improving the traffic situation, it may have been worth the trouble. The Big Dig took 15 years and cost somewhere in the neighborhood of $15 billion (nice neighborhood), much of it in federal highway funds. The demolition of the elevated Expressway left behind 20-some acres of undeveloped real estate; plans for its future are still in the works. A project whose success is easier to see is the massive cleanup of Boston Harbor, ordered by a federal judge and executed throughout the 1990s. The water, which was so polluted that its condition became an issue in the 1988 Presidential campaign, is now so clean that it supports a huge population of fish (mostly striped bass).

The meaning of a Smoot... When you walk across Harvard Bridge to get one of the best available views of the Boston skyline, look down and you'll notice the hatch marks known as Smoots. They've been repainted over the years but still reflect the exact length of an MIT student (Oliver Smoot, class of 1962), who was painstakingly laid end to end over the bridge in 1958 to officially measure it at 364.4 Smoots and 1 ear. FYI, 1 Smoot is 5 feet, 7 inches.

Where the hills of John Winthrop's city went... After deserting Charlestown for the Shawmut Peninsula (today's Boston), the leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop, instructed his followers to see themselves as a "city on a hill." You may notice the hills are gone today. Instead we have landfill. Tremont Street, heart of the Theater District, gets its name from the three original peaks ("Trimountaine") around Boston Common. They were leveled, leaving one shorter mound, today's Beacon Hill, in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The dirt now supports several neighborhoods: Charles Street, where antiques stores cater to the elegant households on "the flat of the hill"; the West End, once a colorful, ethnically integrated tenement district and now home to a sterile hospital and high-rise apartment complex; and North Station, where you'll find the FleetCenter arena (as well as sports bars galore). Another former peak was nicknamed "Mount Whoredom," thanks to its bordellos that catered to sailors. Among the skyscrapers in the busy-by-day, slow-at-night Financial District, High Street isn't very high anymore; its remains may sit over the original site of the Boston Tea Party. The hill here was Fort Hill, which got its name because (hey!) a fort stood on it. Also here was Fort Point, a name that survives in Fort Point Channel, between downtown and South Boston.

Where you can smoke... Take it outside. In 2004, Massachusetts banned smoking in workplaces, including restaurants, nightclubs, and—have mercy—bars. Huddle in your hotel room, risk the wrath of passersby and light up in a park, or join the other pariahs on the sidewalk. Within an hour after the doors open, a canopy of carcinogens surrounds the door of pretty much every nightspot in the state.



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Basic Stuff

Memo to Boston-area hotel operators: Be careful what you wish for.

In the tech heyday of the late 1990s, hoteliers charged as much as they thought they could get away with—and they got away with a lot. Boston had relatively few hotel rooms, even for a small city, and hotel developers saw an opportunity. So they started planning new hotels, better hotels, hotels that would thrive on a never-ending supply of Internet billionaires.

Well, we all know how *that* turned out.

The one-two punch of the tech catastrophe and the 9/11 attacks landed hard on hotels everywhere. In Boston, hundreds of new rooms were already in the pipeline; they're in hotels that are opening now, helping to balance the supply-and-demand equation. Boston will never be a dirt-cheap destination—it's just too small—but if you do enough planning, you can make a sweet deal.

It's important to reserve in advance if you're traveling at popular times—foliage season, graduation season, busy spells during convention season (roughly April–Nov). You'll find the best deals during the only truly slow time, from January through March. Whatever you're paying, make sure you explore your options. Views vary from a city skyline or the Public Garden or the Dumpster to panoramas of the Charles or the harbor or the parking lot, so be explicit when you make your reservations. And always think "high up": You'll get great views from the upper floors of high-rise hotels, and even in low-rises, top floors will be quieter.

One more word of advice: The three features that vary most in availability and price from hotel to hotel are fitness facilities, Internet access, and parking. Ask before you book. A day pass to an off-premises health club will set you back at least $10 a day, and the closest facility to your hotel may not have a pool. Some hotels charge for high-speed or wi-fi access, but quite a few don't—many new and newly renovated properties include it in the room rate. Parking can add nearly $40 a day to your bill, so scope out the situation in advance if you're bringing a car—and think seriously about not driving. Plane fare may look like a great deal after you total the cost of gas, tolls, parking, and (if you're not careful) parking tickets.

Winning the Reservations Game

Just call the hotel, reserve the dates you want, and give a credit card number, right? Wrong! Paying the asking price is like

paying full fare for a plane ticket: strictly for chumps. Some smaller hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, and hostels do have fixed tariffs, but most big hotels do not. This is great money-saving news for guests.

Happily for vacationers, some of the best deals happen on weekends, when executives and their expense accounts go home (though even executives can save by asking for a corporate rate). Be sure to ask about weekend rates when you first call; they can save you as much as $100 per night. Weekend packages might include meals, tickets to an attraction (such as a big museum show), health club "extras," and parking. In addition, some hotels run packages for couples, others offer family discounts, and many hotels allow kids to stay free with a parent—though the age limit varies from 12 to 18, so ask. Check out the Boston Travel Planner, available from the Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau (Tel 888/SEE-BOSTON or 617/536-4100; www.bostonusa.com), for many advertised packages.

One big factor in pricing is availability. That means hotels would rather rent a room cheap than not at all, so you can find major discounts out of season or by waiting until the last minute. The online agencies are great for this: Check Expedia, Travelocity, and (if you're feeling adventurous) Priceline and Hotwire before you book anything.

If you prefer a bed-and-breakfast, reservations services can do the footwork for you. Try Bed & Breakfast Agency of Boston (Tel 617/720-3540 or 800/248-9262, fax 617/523-5761; www.boston-bnbagency.com), Bed and Breakfast Associates Bay Colony (Tel 617/720-0522 or 888/486-6018, fax 781/455-6745; www.bnbboston.com), or Host Homes of Boston (Tel 617/244-1308 or 800/600-1308 outside Mass., fax 617/244-5156; www.hosthomesofboston.com).

Is There a Right Address?

That depends on the purpose of your trip. If you're spending all your time in the Financial District, for example, a hotel in Harvard Square isn't the best idea—you'll waste time commuting, and if you wanted to be a cranky commuter, you could do that at home. Vacationers and travelers mixing business with pleasure can afford to be more flexible.

The Back Bay is in the middle of everything: It has the Public Garden, the city's best shopping, the Hynes Convention Center, and Symphony Hall. Elegant Beacon Hill has a few overnight options, including a handful of bed-and-breakfasts and the luxurious Fifteen Beacon hotel. Besides the snob value,

the location is excellent, with Boston Common and the Public Garden on one side, the Charles River on the other, and good T access. The South End, with shady streets of Victorian row houses, is a gentrified and gentrifying area with a population that looks like America—black, white, Hispanics, gay, straight, and trendy young professional—and a couple of no-frills lodging alternatives.

Stay downtown in some cities and you'll see nothing but empty streets and darkened office buildings at night; in Boston, however, downtown is alive after 5pm, mainly because it's near the harbor and the cheerful, touristy area around Faneuil Hall. Cross the Charles to Cambridge—where many accommodations cater to Harvard or MIT business—and take advantage of prime riverside locations. There's no obvious reason to choose Cambridge over Boston; prices and quality are about the same in both, and Cambridge is well served by the T.

The Lowdown

Are you sure this is Boston?... A typical hotel room in Boston has traditionally looked like a typical hotel room in a lot of other places: dark-wood furniture, TV armoire, heavy drapes, and a watercolor over the bed. Until recently. Several relatively new properties are contemporary and comfortable but not at all frilly. Sophisticated **Nine Zero,** red brick and not particularly elaborate, resembles the office buildings in its centrally located neighborhood. Inside, it's luxury all the way, with Frette linens, down comforters and pillows, and lots of high-tech amenities. A stone's throw away (if you have a good arm), **Fifteen Beacon** is even cushier, thanks in part to the over-the-top service: The desk staff, doormen, and concierge all remember your name. (If you forget, peek at the personalized business cards you receive at check-in.) It's a true boutique property, with only 61 rooms, top-of-the-line Italian linens on the canopy beds, LCD TVs in the bathrooms, and surround-sound stereos. In the Back Bay, the **Charlesmark Hotel** is half the size of Fifteen Beacon and less than half the price. It has its own "budget boutique" appeal: great location (at the Boston Marathon finish line), cunningly designed little rooms with pillow-top beds, high ceilings, and warm, welcoming service.

Are you positive this is Boston?... Two first-rate brands have ventured into the market in recent years. Irish favorite Jurys Doyle made a splash by buying the former police headquarters building in the Back Bay and reinventing it as the luxurious **Jurys Boston Hotel.** The result is a big step up from "three hots and a cot": It offers the full range of peel-me-a-grape amenities, including down comforters and ergonomic desk chairs, in good-size rooms (no cells here) that exude low-key luxe. The boutique **Kimpton Hotel Group,** of Hotel Monaco fame, is a presence on both sides of the river. The hotels' dramatic jewel-toned color schemes are quite different, but the atmosphere of ultra-comfortable luxury is the same. **Hotel Marlowe** is an airy property in East Cambridge near the Museum of Science. It's a hit with a tech-savvy business clientele as well as families who appreciate its proximity to the Museum of Science, CambridgeSide Galleria mall, and Charles River (across a busy street). The **Onyx Hotel** is in a great location on a side street near North Station, a somewhat tatty area that gets a bit more desirable every time the Big Dig takes another step toward completion. The 10-story building has just 112 rooms, including a unit decorated by Britney Spears, whose summer 2004 tour had the same name as the hotel (a coincidence, but still, how un-Boston is *that?*).

Oh, yeah, this is Boston (19th-century division)... Tradition, tradition! The Victorian-Edwardian aesthetic—elaborate moldings, wood paneling, crystal chandeliers, abundant marble, touches of brass, gilded *everything*—prevails at any number of Boston hotels, including some that opened long after Victoria and Edward were out of the picture. Each has its own claim to fame. The **Omni Parker House,** in a handy location on the Freedom Trail, is the oldest continuously operating hotel in the nation. It opened in 1856 and grew haphazardly, leaving the current building with more than 50 guest-room configurations—ask to be moved if yours is too small. The *haute*-Brahmin feel isn't stuffy—the hotel even nods to Boston's Irish-American political tradition in the name of the bar off the dark, oak-paneled lobby, the Last Hurrah (as in the Edwin O'Connor novel). At the **Copley Square Hotel,** which opened in 1891, receptionists wear genuine smiles, and rates include afternoon tea and cookies in the lounge and

wireless Internet access. Rooms vary in size and configuration—yours may be long and narrow, and it may have an entrance hall or large alcoves. Modern conveniences such as voice mail and electronic keys contrast pleasantly with the comfy 19th-century ambience.

Oh, yeah, this is Boston (20th-century division)... The lobby of the **Lenox Hotel,** vintage 1900, has a jewel-box feel that sets the tone for the whole establishment, noted for its sumptuous guest rooms and pampering service. It's a relatively small (212 rooms) but worthy competitor for the megaliths at Copley Place, a block away. The newly renovated **Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel,** which opened in 1912, fits right in with the elaborate architecture of its neighbors facing Copley Square (the Boston Public Library and Trinity Church). The Copley Plaza's Renaissance Revival style, executed by the same architect responsible for New York's famed Plaza, complements the courtly service and the hotel's status as the official lodging of the Boston Symphony Orchestra (it doesn't get much more ruling-class than that). The **Ritz-Carlton, Boston,** the original link in the luxury chain, is a 1927 building that was extensively renovated for its 75th anniversary in 2002 but still feels unapologetically old-fashioned. It overlooks the Public Garden, with smashing views from the higher floors.

For travelers with old money... Where else but a Ritz-Carlton? Visitors to Boston have two to choose from: the original **Ritz-Carlton, Boston** (the "old Ritz") and the new **Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common.** If you like old-world comfort with plenty of woodwork and antiques, check into the original property. It oozes tradition and money and even has a butler (who helps you choose the right fuel for the wood-burning fireplace in your opulent suite). If you prefer sleek and modern, the new Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common is a better bet. Rooms fill the top four floors of a 12-story building on a side street off Boston Common, a rather drab setting for such a cushy hotel. The Ritz offers its high-maintenance guests high-intensity pampering—Bose radio/CD players, phones in the huge marble bathrooms, the customary great service. Room rates include access to the Sports Club/LA, an enormous facility with everything from a regulation basketball court to complete spa services (even guests at the old Ritz must pay

to use the club, which is otherwise private but has a public restaurant and snack bar).

For travelers with new money... Not new as in nouveau riche, you big snob—new as in post-*Mayflower*. The best place to spend that filthy lucre is, without question, the **Four Seasons Hotel.** Since it opened in 1985, the exquisite Four Seasons has competed for local supremacy with the more traditional Ritz, diagonally across the Public Garden. We give the edge to the Four Seasons. Service at both hotels is comparable—in the dizzy realm where your wish really is someone else's command—but the Four Seasons has generally larger rooms (at generally steeper prices) and a health club and 51-foot pool on the premises. Rooms are light and luxurious, with king-size beds, and there's free limo service to downtown. The Four Seasons, crossing the line between luxurious and simply ridiculous, offers a room-service menu for pets.

For travelers with money, period... Old, new, who cares—if you have enough money, stay at the sparkling **Boston Harbor Hotel.** Sea breezes blow through the magnificent 80-foot archway, a gateway to Boston from the sea. A museum-quality art collection and Chippendale-style furniture in the rooms give the interior a refined spin. The hotel and adjoining buildings (shops, offices, and condos) at the 15-story Rowes Wharf complex are an architectural dream. Across the street from the Financial District and an easy walk from Faneuil Hall Marketplace, this is the most inspired and inspiring hotel in the city. Across the river in Cambridge, the vibe at the **Charles Hotel** is traditional but not in the way you'd expect—the Shaker-style custom furnishings are plain but superplush, with down comforters and Bose Wave radios. Rooms are large and peaceful—you'd never know the mayhem of Harvard Square was right outside. The restaurant, Rialto, is our favorite in the Boston area.

For travelers with no money (or not much)... In the heart of the Back Bay, the pocket-sized **Charlesmark Hotel** is a good deal not just because the price is reasonable but also because management doesn't believe in tacking a lot of extras onto the bill. Rates include continental breakfast and high-speed Internet access, and bottled water

and fruit are always available in the second-floor lobby, where guests can use a computer and printer at no extra charge. Don't believe the brochure—the **MidTown Hotel** is not "Boston's most convenient hotel," but it is reasonably priced and reasonably close to Copley Square, on a busy stretch of Huntington Avenue. One of its big selling points is free parking, and it has enough business features to make it popular with conventioneers. It's more of a motel than a hotel, at just two stories, but the rooms are a good size (though bathrooms are small), and there's a seasonal outdoor pool. Another good value in a good location is the **Chandler Inn Hotel,** an eight-story anomaly amid the town houses of the South End. A tad farther out is the **Howard Johnson Inn** behind Fenway Park—an absolutely run-of-the-mill HoJo, but it's convenient to Red Sox games and has a pool.

Seriously, no money... Convenient to Symphony Hall, the Museum of Fine Arts, and the Back Bay, **Hostelling International—Boston** gets into the "Kum-ba-ya" spirit with free and cheap group activities nearly every night. It accommodates up to six people (all men, all women, or co-ed) in each of its cheerful but hardly plush rooms. Somewhat more comfortable (it used to be a Howard Johnson's) but open for less than 3 months a year, **Hostelling International—Boston at Fenway** is a summer-only alternative that puts a maximum of three (all male or all female) in each dorm room. Both hostels kick you out after 2 weeks. One of a dying breed, the **YWCA Boston, Berkeley Residence** on the edge of the South End is one of those women-only hotels—shades of "Bosom Buddies"—with convent-like single, double, and triple rooms and shared bathrooms. Ask for a room overlooking the pleasant garden.

Anonymous giants... Sometimes you just want to close the soundproof door, grab the remote, and order room service. If you find anonymity more relaxing than friendly fuss, head for the **Westin Copley Place Boston** or the **Boston Marriott Copley Place.** These sleek modern towers are on opposite ends of Copley Place, Boston's premier shopping mall. You could close your eyes and know what the guest rooms look like (plush business deluxe), but you won't even want to blink when you see the sweeping views from the higher floors. The vast lobbies are great for people-watching;

the Marriott's has a gargantuan chandelier, marble floors, trees, and a waterfall, as well as a glitzy glass walkway leading to the Prudential Center (more shops). On entering the Westin, you glide up an escalator past a thundering waterfall; bear right to check in, or you'll be lost in the retail jungle almost instantly.

Not too big, not too small... The top Goldilocks in Boston is the **Lenox Hotel** in the Back Bay. A complete overhaul before its 100th anniversary in 2000 made it one of Boston's most luxurious hotels. Even with a couple of hundred rooms, it offers pleasant service that starts with the unfailingly cheerful doormen. Rooms have brass doorknockers, brass chandeliers, and marble bathrooms, and a dozen corner units have fireplaces. In Kenmore Square, the fabulous **Hotel Commonwealth** is an indulgent retreat in a central location. It looks traditional but opened in 2003, in a new six-story building with retail at street level. The style in its 150 rooms is old-fashioned only in good ways—luxurious fabrics and linens, gorgeous furnishings, proper service—with large bathrooms and high-tech features *real* old-fashioned hotels seldom have. The 267-unit **DoubleTree Hotel Boston Downtown** looks superficially like a product of the chain assembly line, but on closer inspection it abounds with Asian touches, a nod to its Chinatown location. Both downtown and the Back Bay are easy to reach on foot or by T. Rates include access to the large, well-equipped Wang YMCA, which has a pool that reserves lanes for hotel guests at regular times.

Convenient for conventioneers... The **Sheraton Boston Hotel** connects directly to the Hynes Convention Center, giving it particular appeal to the convention hordes. The 29-story Sheraton offers something for everyone, from sleigh beds to an indoor/outdoor domed pool complex with Jacuzzi and health club. As you might expect, the business features are excellent, especially on the executive-level floors at the top of the tower. Two other titans, the **Boston Marriott Copley Place** and the **Westin Copley Place Boston,** are relatively close to the Hynes—walkways over Huntington Avenue connect Copley Place to the Prudential Center, so in bad weather you don't even have to go outside to get there. Both have their own conference facilities, too, and lobbies so big and busy you'll

never notice how many folks are wearing the same plastic tags. The soaring **Seaport Hotel,** convenient to the World Trade Center, is anything but a cookie-cutter high-rise, designed by Boston's homegrown Fidelity Investments to cater to suits and visiting conventioneers (it also does lots of weekend weddings). Book on the upper floors and your roomy room will have a lofty view of Boston Harbor or the city skyline. Thanks to one of Boston's favorite indoor sports—political wrangling—the new Boston Convention & Exhibit Center won't have an on-site hotel before 2006; until it does, the Seaport is the closest hotel.

Where to drop after you shop... The **Newbury Guest House** is on Boston's best shopping street, surrounded by boutiques, antiques shops, art galleries, hair salons, and restaurants. It consists of two 19th-century town houses filled with reproduction Victorian furniture, polished pine floorboards, and prints from the MFA. Closer to Copley Place and the Shops at Prudential Center, the European-style **Colonnade** has elegant rooms with plenty of space for your shopping bags, friendly service by the multilingual staff, a cheery yellow duck in the bathtub, and a pool on the roof. Under the same ownership as the Newbury Guest House, the **Harborside Inn** is in a renovated warehouse across the street from Faneuil Hall Marketplace's chain stores and pushcarts. The building puts us in mind of an artists' loft with normal-height ceilings; it has exposed brick and granite walls, hardwood floors, Oriental rugs, and reproduction Victorian furniture. In Cambridge, **Hotel Marlowe** is next door to the CambridgeSide Galleria mall, and the **Royal Sonesta Hotel** is across the street; both are contemporary and comfy, with soothing river views from most rooms at the Sonesta and some at the Marlowe.

Landmark restorations... Ordinarily we shy away from repeating slogans, but "It would be a crime to stay anywhere else" is too good not to mention. The **Jurys Hotel Boston** is a complete rehab of the onetime Boston police headquarters, which originally opened in 1925. The posh appointments give no hint that the brick-and-limestone building—part of the Irish chain whose other two North American properties are in Washington, D.C.—was ever anything but an upscale lodging. But you can still pull the hood of your sweatshirt over your face if you want to. In

the heart of the Financial District, the **Langham Hotel Boston** is in the former Federal Reserve Bank, modeled after a 16th-century Roman palazzo. Distinctive red awnings trim the outside of this historic landmark, which sits amid some of the tallest skyscrapers in the city across from a patch of greenery, the plush Post Office Square Park. Marble corridors lead to a cream-colored marble lobby with square marble pillars; a grand marble staircase sweeps up to the glass-roofed Café Fleuri and the posh Julien restaurant. Guest rooms, which vary in size and shape, have formal striped upholstery and (you'll never guess) marble bathroom floors and tubs. Langham, which operates in Asia and England, took over this property, formerly Le Meridien Boston, in 2004—but thus far the only obvious change is that the operators no longer croon "*bonjour*" when they answer the phone.

Luscious love nests... Always ask about romance getaway packages; most major hotels offer them, usually on weekends. Expect the usual: champagne, chocolates, flowers, breakfast in bed, and so forth. Staff members who've spent the week wrangling with the BlackBerry-toting crowd will be happy to aid your amorous efforts, and what could be more romantic than valet parking (included in many packages)?

Our top choice for romance is the all-suite **Eliot Hotel.** On leafy Commonwealth Avenue, the European-style Eliot is elaborate but not fussy, with discreet service and a special-occasion restaurant (Clio) conveniently located in the lobby. Show your affection with a shopping spree on Newbury Street, a block away, or book a suite with a pantry and never leave the building. Another great place for an assignation is **Fifteen Beacon,** an oasis on Beacon Hill. Order up a rare 1700s (yes, you read that right) bottle of wine from the cellar—your minibar stocks champagne, too—turn on the surround sound, grab something sultry from the CD library, fire up the gas fireplace, and sink into the custom-tailored linens.

If Victorian decor, antiques, and lush carpets say "romance" to you, head to North Cambridge and settle into **A Cambridge House Bed & Breakfast Inn,** with its canopy beds and fabric-covered walls. Ask for the main building—rooms in the neighboring carriage house are smaller—and try to face away from the street, which is a

bus route (the building is set far enough back that noise isn't a real problem, but a view of buses doesn't seem very romantic).

Down by the sea... Ferries and excursion boats come and go, planes take off and land across the water, skyscrapers loom over the main entrance: Even the most jaded traveler can't help but catch the excitement at the spectacular **Boston Harbor Hotel** at Rowes Wharf. In any other lodging, the city skyline would be breathtaking enough, but at this stunning contemporary hotel, you'll probably want a room with a harbor view. On the Charlestown waterfront, the **Marriott Residence Inn Boston Harbor** offers an interesting perspective—even the pool in the lobby has a view of the water, and rooms that face north give you an eyeful of the Zakim Bridge. The extended-stay hotel (you can spend just 1 night; rates drop for 5 nights or more) is next to the Charlestown Navy Yard, just off the Freedom Trail. If you stay at the **Hyatt Harborside** at the airport, you'll have to pay for the water shuttle or water taxi (or take the hotel shuttle to the Airport T) every time you want to go into town. If you don't mind that, the Hyatt is a great choice, showy and futuristic but with appropriately maritime paintings of tall ships on the walls. The tiered **Boston Marriott Long Wharf** is supposed to resemble a ship (a redbrick ship?), thrusting out into the sea from Long Wharf. A popular after-work bar and an open-plan lobby (displaying a famed Rufus Porter fresco) make it a lively, integral part of the waterfront scene. Most guest rooms have sea views, and the breezy location makes this a pleasant spot even on the hottest summer afternoon.

On the river... The upscale **Royal Sonesta Hotel,** technically in Cambridge but so close to Boston you'd never notice, sits on the banks of the Charles; most rooms offer fabulous views of the city skyline. The CambridgeSide Galleria mall, the Museum of Science, and MIT are within easy walking distance, though for anything else you'll probably need a taxi or the T. **Hotel Marlowe**'s views aren't as dramatic, but rooms on higher floors of the eight-story building provide good vistas. On the other side of the MIT campus, the **Hyatt Regency Cambridge** offers excellent views; the riverside jogging and cycling path is across

Memorial Drive, along with a flock of honking geese. The typically Hyatt atrium resonates with noise; the rooms are standard-issue deluxe, so request a river-view balcony—it'll go a long way toward making your stay feel special.

Park your carcass in Harvard Yard... Close to Harvard Square, the **Charles Hotel** masterfully blends past and present, just like this old university city. The modern exterior looks like a pile of rectangular blocks, in traditional redbrick that echoes the Harvard campus. In the luxurious guest rooms, light woods and clean lines lend a contemporary feel, and geometric-patterned quilts drape the simple four-poster beds. The hotel's Regattabar is one of the area's coolest jazz spots, and the health club, spa, and salon are equally noteworthy. The **Inn at Harvard,** across the street from the campus, is a Georgian-style redbrick building (put up in 1991) with a stunning four-story, glass-roofed atrium lobby, the "living room." Guest rooms with round, square, and arched windows overlook the lobby, which was designed to look like a Venetian piazza. Although the **DoubleTree Guest Suites** hotel is on the Boston side of the river, it's handier to Cambridge: It's next door to Harvard Business School and across the bridge from Central Square. Modern two-room units surround a 15-story central atrium; many rooms have views over the river toward Cambridge.

Sweet suites... Boston has only a handful of all-suite properties, but they provide plenty of choice in character and ambience. The **DoubleTree Guest Suites** is a plush high-rise overlooking the Charles and the Mass. Pike; the **Eliot Hotel** is small and deluxe, with flowery balconies overlooking Commonwealth Avenue. The Eliot also has a small split-level lobby where the writing desk and fresh flowers call to mind an elegant private foyer, while glass elevators whiz up the DoubleTree's totally mod atrium. The **Marriott Residence Inn Boston Harbor** calls all of its units suites even though some are studios, but it's worth considering for its great location and the fact that every unit has a full kitchen.

For traveling families... Start by checking out the perennial family favorites, like the **DoubleTree Guest Suites**

(with two separate rooms, a fridge, and two TVs in each suite); the **Best Western Boston/The Inn at Longwood Medical** (large rooms with Nintendo and the Disney and Nickelodeon channels); or the more convenient **MidTown Hotel** (good-sized rooms, free parking, and an outdoor pool). Then check the cut-off age for kids to stay free in a parent's room. If you're feeling flush and your family is large (or your kids are), look into discounts for booking an extra room—the rate can be as much as 50% off. Some properties won't guarantee that the rooms will be next door to each other, while some promise they'll even have a connecting door; make sure you can get what you need.

And always look into family packages—nearly every hotel offers them, particularly in the summer—and packages that include admission to special museum exhibits, which target adults but may appeal to older kids. The **Colonnade Hotel's VIKids** program welcomes kids with toy-filled fanny packs; packages include parking, tickets to an attraction such as the Children's Museum or New England Aquarium, and breakfast. The Colonnade also has a nice pool in a cool location: the roof. The pool at the **Seaport Hotel** is indoors, with music piped in underwater; packages here might include admission to the nearby Children's Museum, and this is one of the only hotels that offers a deal specifically for grandparents traveling with grandchildren. From Memorial Day through Labor Day, the **Royal Sonesta Hotel** in Cambridge offers free boat rides on the Charles, free use of bicycles, and free ice cream every afternoon (obviously, the person who thought up this sugarfest won't be supervising bedtime). Off-season packages include passes to the Museum of Science or the Aquarium. The hotel has a great indoor/outdoor pool with retractable roof, and it's around the corner from the Museum of Science. The **Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel** creates a family deal for every season; it usually includes parking, passes for an attraction (such as the Museum of Science), or activity (like the Swan Boats) and visitor T passes.

For students and their families... Every admissions office can suggest nearby hotels to prospective students and perhaps even get you a break on the room rate. Boston University is a partner in the **Hotel Commonwealth,** a summa cum laude example of high-class pampering in the

heart of Kenmore Square. Visitors to Emerson College can base themselves at the **DoubleTree Hotel Boston Downtown.** Students interested in Northeastern University may find the **MidTown Hotel,** down Huntington Avenue from the campus, to their liking. In Cambridge, let the kids rough it in the dorm while the parents kick back. The contemporary **Charles Hotel** and the throwback **Inn at Harvard** are in Harvard Square, and the **Hyatt Regency Cambridge** is so close to MIT that pranksters keep defacing the traffic sign out front by changing GEESE CROSSING to GEEKS CROSSING.

For travelers who want to avoid families... This is a real brain-teaser: Even hotels that could pass for NC-17 theater lobbies during the week court families on weekends, when you can trip on ankle-biters at even the priciest lodgings. Think weeknight; if you can't, think quiet and romantic. A **Cambridge House Bed & Breakfast Inn** is a top choice, immaculately decorated with antiques and nowhere near kid-friendly attractions—it's an ideal place if you have three toddlers and decided to leave them home. **Fifteen Beacon** is another promising destination; the atmosphere of pure luxury doesn't exactly say Barney and Barbie, and neither does the $400-a-night (at least) tab.

Front-row seats for theater lovers... You can walk to the Theater District from almost any hotel in town, but our choice is the **DoubleTree Hotel Boston Downtown,** around the corner in Chinatown. Rooms in the former high school are compact but take advantage of every inch; a feng shui expert consulted to make sure the design channels energy correctly (hence the giant fish tank smack in the middle of the lobby). Nearby, the **Radisson Hotel Boston** is also convenient but has less character—it's a concrete high-rise with private balconies, large rooms, a modest indoor pool, and a fitness room.

For sightseers... Faneuil Hall Marketplace is the tourist hub of the Hub, and the classiest hotel in the neighborhood is the **Millennium Bostonian Hotel.** Geraniums fill the window boxes, but it's not really a flowery place—a stunning steel sculpture and fountain decorate the circular cobbled parking area outside the lobby, where the lounge

sits beneath an atrium of glass and steel. Rooms, which spread over three 19th-century buildings, vary in size and style. In the 1824 Harkness building, they have fireplaces, exposed brick, Jacuzzis, and oak ceiling beams; newer accommodations are modern, with brass fixtures, striped wallpaper, and big dressing rooms and bathrooms. The location may sound like an asset, but some rooms can be noisy if you open the French doors to the little balcony (foiling the soundproofing)—it's less of a problem now that the Big Dig is winding up, but think higher than the third floor if you want a balcony room. Less expensive but equally well situated is the **Harborside Inn,** in a renovated 1858 warehouse. The **Wyndham Boston,** a couple of blocks from the marketplace and waterfront, is a 1928 Art Deco building with cookie-cutter high-end rooms.

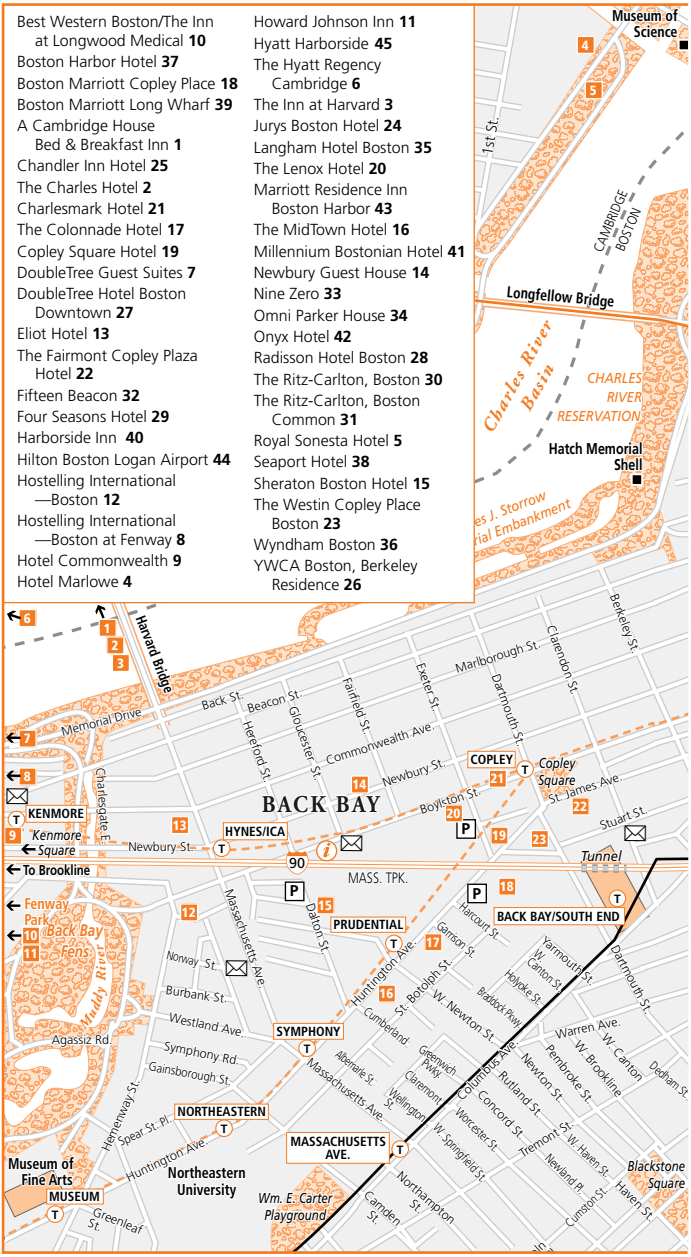
At the airport... There are two hotels on the airport grounds and a handful a shuttle-bus ride away (but none of the cheap chain motels you usually see around airports). The **Hilton Boston Logan Airport** is more than you'd expect: As part of the massive revitalization project that has plagued travelers for a good chunk of the past decade, the hotel was built from scratch; it opened in 1999. The designers apparently started with the soundproofing, which is superb, and proceeded to plan a pleasant high-end hotel with loads of business features (including abundant meeting space). You can't miss the **Hyatt Harborside,** with its great brick-and-glass tower and sweeping lighthouse beam. Free shuttle buses serve both hotels; the Hyatt is beside the ferry dock, where you can catch the water shuttle or water taxi and be downtown in 7 minutes.

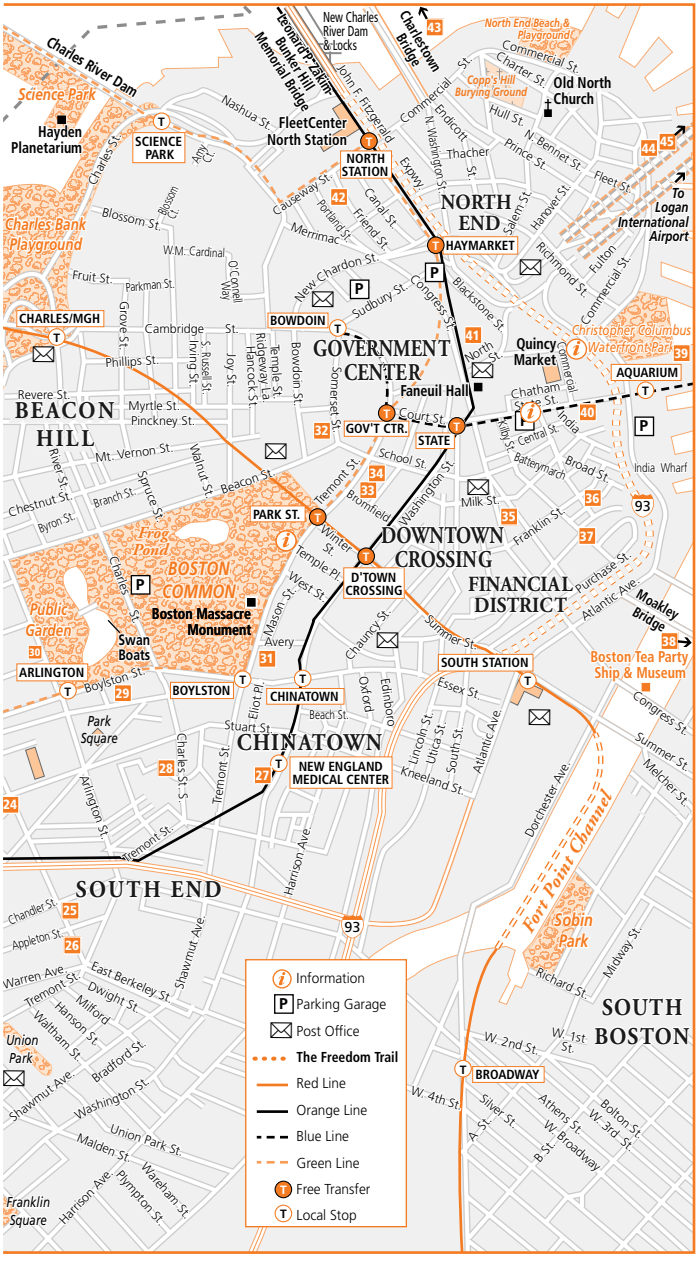
Where to see a celebrity... "Celebrity" is a relative term in Boston—politicians (in Harvard Square), scientists (in Kendall Square), musicians (around Symphony Hall), hockey players (near the FleetCenter), authors (everywhere), and other people who wouldn't get a second glance from an E! camera crew attract whispering and pointing. But let's assume you're interested in people the E! camera crew would chase after. Mainstream celebrities who want to see their names in the gossip columns stay at the **Four Seasons Hotel,** the **Charles Hotel,** and the **Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common** (for the health club). Those who are

serious when they say they want their privacy are more likely to alight at the **Lenox Hotel** or **Fifteen Beacon.** If you're a fan of a visiting baseball team, stake out the lobby of the **Sheraton Boston Hotel** or the **Boston Marriott Copley Place.** And if the ballpark itself is enough of a celebrity for you, book a Fenway room at the Hotel Commonwealth and gaze at it from across the Mass. Pike.

Map 2: Boston Accommodations

- Best Western Boston/The Inn at Longwood Medical **10**
- Boston Harbor Hotel **37**
- Boston Marriott Copley Place **18**
- Boston Marriott Long Wharf **39**
- A Cambridge House Bed & Breakfast Inn **1**
- Chandler Inn Hotel **25**
- The Charles Hotel **2**
- Charlesmark Hotel **21**
- The Colonnade Hotel **17**
- Copley Square Hotel **19**
- DoubleTree Guest Suites **7**
- DoubleTree Hotel Boston Downtown **27**
- Eliot Hotel **13**
- The Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel **22**
- Fifteen Beacon **32**
- Four Seasons Hotel **29**
- Harborside Inn **40**
- Hilton Boston Logan Airport **44**
- Hostelling International —Boston **12**
- Hostelling International —Boston at Fenway **8**
- Hotel Commonwealth **9**
- Hotel Marlowe **4**
- Howard Johnson Inn **11**
- Hyatt Harborside **45**
- The Hyatt Regency Cambridge **6**
- The Inn at Harvard **3**
- Jurys Boston Hotel **24**
- Langham Hotel Boston **35**
- The Lenox Hotel **20**
- Marriott Residence Inn Boston Harbor **43**
- The MidTown Hotel **16**
- Millennium Bostonian Hotel **41**
- Newbury Guest House **14**
- Nine Zero **33**
- Omni Parker House **34**
- Onyx Hotel **42**
- Radisson Hotel Boston **28**
- The Ritz-Carlton, Boston **30**
- The Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common **31**
- Royal Sonesta Hotel **5**
- Seaport Hotel **38**
- Sheraton Boston Hotel **15**
- The Westin Copley Place Boston **23**
- Wyndham Boston **36**
- YWCA Boston, Berkeley Residence **26**




Charles River Dam
Science Park
Hayden Planetarium
SCIENCE PARK
Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge
New Charles River Dam & Locks
Charlestown Bridge
North End Beach & Playground
Copp's Hill Burying Ground
Old North Church
FleetCenter North Station
NORTH STATION
NORTH END
HAYMARKET
To Logan International Airport
Charles Bank Playground
CHARLES/MGH
BOWDOIN
GOVERNMENT CENTER
Quincy Market
Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park
AQUARIUM
Faneuil Hall
BEACON HILL
GOV'T CTR.
STATE
PARK ST.
DOWNTOWN CROSSING
D'TOWN CROSSING
FINANCIAL DISTRICT
Frog Pond
BOSTON COMMON
Boston Massacre Monument
Public Garden
Swan Boats
ARLINGTON
BOYLSTON
CHINATOWN
SOUTH STATION
Boston Tea Party Ship & Museum
Park Square
NEW ENGLAND MEDICAL CENTER
SOUTH END
Fort Point Channel
Sobin Park
SOUTH BOSTON
BROADWAY
Union Park
Franklin Square
Information
Parking Garage
Post Office
The Freedom Trail
Red Line
Orange Line
Blue Line
Green Line
Free Transfer
Local Stop



The Index

$$$$$	over $350
$$$$	$250–$350
$$$	$175–$250
$$	$100–$175
$	under $100

Price ratings are based on the lowest price quoted for a standard double room in high season, including taxes and charges. Unless otherwise noted, rooms have air-conditioning, phones, private baths, and TVs.

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express
DC	Diners Club
DISC	Discover
MC	MasterCard
V	Visa

See Map 2 on p. 30 for all accommodations listings.

Best Western Boston/The Inn at Longwood Medical **(p. 26)** OUTSKIRTS Some rooms have queen-size beds; others have kings and kitchenettes. Close to Harvard hospitals.... *Tel 617/731-4700 (800/468-2378, 800/528-1234). Fax 617/731-4870. www.innatlongwood.com. 342 Longwood Ave., 02446. Longwood T stop (Green Line D). 161 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

Boston Harbor Hotel **(p. 19)** WATERFRONT Landmark hotel on the waterfront with excellent pool and spa.... *Tel 617/439-7000 (800/752-7077). Fax 617/330-9450. www.bhh.com. 70 Rowes Wharf, 02110. Aquarium or South Station T stop. 230 rooms, 24 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

Boston Marriott Copley Place **(p. 20)** BACK BAY A deluxe business-oriented convention hotel with a fine health club.... *Tel 617/236-5800 (800/228-9290). Fax 617/236-5885. www.copleymarriott.com. 110 Huntington Ave., 02116. Back Bay T stop. 1,147 rooms, 77 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

Boston Marriott Long Wharf (p. 24) WATERFRONT Super-convenient to waterfront attractions like the Aquarium, Faneuil Hall, and Boston Harbor boat trips, this bold and breezy hotel offers great packages.... *Tel 617/227-0800 (800/228-9290). Fax 617/227-2867. www.marriottlongwharf.com. 296 State St., 02109. Aquarium T stop. 400 rooms, 12 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

A Cambridge House Bed & Breakfast Inn (p. 23) CAMBRIDGE A gem with elegant spacious rooms, most with working fireplaces, all with private baths, are très romantic. Although this antique-filled B&B is on busy Mass. Ave., it's well back from the street. A shopping center and the T are nearby.... *Tel 617/491-6300 (800/232-9989). Fax 617/868-2848. www.acambridgehouse.com. 2218 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge 02140. Porter or Davis T stop. 15 rooms. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

Chandler Inn Hotel (p. 20) SOUTH END This 8-story South End hotel offers small, air-conditioned rooms with double or twin beds, TVs, and phones. It's a short walk to Back Bay Station and not far from downtown.... *Tel 617/482-3450 (800/842-3450). Fax 617/542-3428. www.chandlerinn.com. 26 Chandler St., 02116. Back Bay T stop. 56 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

The Charles Hotel (p. 19) CAMBRIDGE This contemporary luxury hotel near Harvard Square has a tri-level health club with machines, pool, and Jacuzzi.... *Tel 617/864-1200 (800/882-1818). Fax 617/864-5715. www.charleshotel.com. 1 Bennett St., Cambridge 02138. Harvard T stop. 293 rooms, 44 suites. AE, DC, MC, V. $$$$*

Charlesmark Hotel (p. 16) BACK BAY The great location, warm service, and thoughtful design (built-ins galore) more than make up for the small scale of the rooms.... *Tel 617/247-1212. Fax 617/247-1224. www.thecharlesmark.com. 655 Boylston St., 02116. Copley T stop. 33 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$.*

The Colonnade Hotel (p. 22) BACK BAY A centrally located hotel with big, elegant rooms, a seasonal rooftop pool, and terrific packages.... *Tel 617/424-7000 (800/962-3030). Fax 617/424-1717. www.colonnadehotel.com. 120 Huntington Ave., 02116. Prudential T stop. 285 rooms, 10 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

Copley Square Hotel (p. 17) BACK BAY Built in 1891, the Copley Square is friendly and reasonable, yet competitively modern. Afternoon tea, but no pool.... *Tel 617/536-9000 (800/225-7062). Fax 617/236-0351. www.copleysquarehotel.com. 47 Huntington Ave., 02116. Copley or Back Bay T stop. 143 rooms, 12 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

DoubleTree Guest Suites (p. 25) OUTSKIRTS Across the bridge from Central Square, this all-suite hotel has modern guest rooms, a central atrium, an exercise room, and an indoor pool.... *Tel 617/783-0090 (800/222-8733). Fax 617/783-0897. www.doubletreehotels.com. 400 Soldiers Field Rd., 02134. Harvard Sq. or Central Sq. T stops. 310 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

DoubleTree Hotel Boston Downtown (p. 21) CHINATOWN Convenient location, lovely design (vetted by a feng shui expert), and access to the Wang YMCA add up to a great deal.... *Tel 617/956-7900 (800/222-8733). Fax 617/956-7901. www.doubletree.com. 821 Washington St., 02111. New England Medical Center T stop. 267 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

Eliot Hotel (p. 23) BACK BAY The chic all-suite hotel attracts a sophisticated clientele with spacious accommodations and Italian marble bathrooms.... *Tel 617/267-1607 (800/44-ELIOT). Fax 617/536-9114. www.eliothotel.com. 370 Commonwealth Ave., 02215. Hynes/ICA T stop. 95 suites. AE, DC, MC, V. $$$$*

The Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel (p. 18) BACK BAY The grande dame of Copley Square, built in 1912, glitters with crystal and shines with style.... *Tel 617/267-5300 (800/441-1414). Fax 617/247-6681. www.fairmont.com. 138 St. James Ave., 02116. Copley or Back Bay T stop. 383 rooms, 51 suites. AE, DC, MC, V. $$$$*

Fifteen Beacon (p. 16) BEACON HILL A study in contradictions: low-key yet opulent, with nonstop pampering atop the ancestral home of Yankee self-denial, Beacon Hill.... *Tel 617/670-1500 (877/XVBEACON). Fax 617/670-2525. www.xvbeacon.com. 15 Beacon St., 02108. Park St. T stop. 61 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

Four Seasons Hotel (p. 19) BACK BAY The best hotel in New England is a mighty modern palace overlooking Boston Common. It offers every luxury, including an on-site health club.... *Tel 617/338-4400 (800/332-3442). Fax 617/423-0154. www.fourseasons.com. 200 Boylston St., 02116. Arlington T stop. 274 rooms, 80 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

Harborside Inn (p. 22) WATERFRONT A great location near Faneuil Hall Marketplace, fine service, and reasonable rates make this converted warehouse a good bet. Corporate sibling of the Newbury Guest House.... *Tel. 617/723-7500 (888/723-7565). Fax 617/670-6015. www.harborsideinnboston.com. 185 State St., 02109. Aquarium T stop. 54 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

Hilton Boston Logan Airport (p. 28) AIRPORT Superb soundproofing, excellent business features, and good T access make this a viable alternative to staying downtown.... *Tel 617/568-6700 (800/HILTONS). Fax 617/568-6800. www.hiltonbostonlogan airport.com. 85 Terminal Rd., Logan International Airport, 02128. Airport T stop and shuttle bus. 600 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

Hostelling International—Boston (p. 20) BACK BAY/FENWAY Most rooms sleep up to six. All have air-conditioning and shared baths. Linen is provided.... *Tel 617/536-9455 (800/909-4776). Fax 617/424-6558. www.bostonhostel.org. 12 Hemenway St., 02115. Hynes/ICA T stop. 46 rooms, 205 beds. AE, DISC, DC not accepted. MC, V. $*

Hostelling International—Boston at Fenway (p. 20) BACK BAY Open only in summer (it's a BU dorm the rest of the year), this former HoJo is air-conditioned, comfortable, and convenient.... *Tel 617/267-8599 (800/909-4776). Fax 617/424-6558. www.hi fenway.org. 575 Commonwealth Ave., 02215. Kenmore T stop. 179 rooms, 485 beds. AE, DISC, DC not accepted. MC, V. $*

Hotel Commonwealth (p. 21) BACK BAY Boston's newest luxury hotel has the latest bells and whistles in a traditional-looking package.... *Tel 617/933-5000 (866/784-4000). Fax 617/266-6888. www.hotelcommonwealth.com. 500 Commonwealth Ave., 02215. Kenmore T stop. 150 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

Hotel Marlowe (p. 17) CAMBRIDGE Talk about making a great first impression: The Kimpton Hotel Group broke into the Boston-area market with this funky boutique property across the street from the river.... *Tel 617/868-8000 (800/825-7040, 800/KIMPTON). Fax 617/868-8001. www.hotelmarlowe.com. 25 Edwin H. Land Blvd., Cambridge 02141. Lechmere T stop. 236 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

Howard Johnson Inn (p. 20) FENWAY This HoJo near Fenway Park has an outdoor pool; some rooms have a microwave and a fridge.... *Tel 617/267-8300 (800/446-4656). Fax 617/267-2763. www.hojo.com. 1271 Boylston St., 02215. Kenmore T stop. 94 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

Hyatt Harborside (p. 24) AIRPORT On the edge of the airport, this hotel has great views of the harbor and city skyline. You'll find good-size rooms and a modern health club.... *Tel 617/568-1234 (800/233-1234). Fax 617/568-6080. www.harborside. hyatt.com. 101 Harborside Dr., 02128. Airport T stop and shuttle bus. 270 rooms, 11 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

The Hyatt Regency Cambridge (p. 24) CAMBRIDGE The landmark Hyatt, vaguely pyramid shaped, sits across the street from the river. Excellent weekend rates and packages; top-notch health club and pool.... *Tel 617/492-1234 (800/233-1234). Fax 617/491-6906. www.cambridge.hyatt.com. 575 Memorial Dr., Cambridge 02139. Central T stop and shuttle bus. 500 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

The Inn at Harvard (p. 25) CAMBRIDGE The atrium lobby steals the show, but guest rooms are impressive, too, with original artwork from Harvard's Fogg Art Museum and interior balconies.... *Tel 617/491-2222 (800/458-5886). Fax 617/491-6520. www.theinnatharvard.com. 1201 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge 02138. Harvard T stop. 109 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

Jurys Boston Hotel (p. 17) BACK BAY Go to jail, go directly to jail...okay, police headquarters, but transformed into a plush hotel that touts its Irish hospitality.... *Tel 617/266-7200 (866/JD-HOTELS). Fax 617/266-7203. www.jurysdoyle.com. 350 Stuart St., 02116. Back Bay or Arlington T. 220 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

Langham Hotel Boston (p. 23) FINANCIAL DISTRICT Smart, glass-roofed hotel occupies a landmark building surrounded by Financial District skyscrapers. Lots of marble, and large guest rooms.... *Tel 617/451-1900 (800/543-4300). Fax 617/423-2844. www.langhamhotels.com/langham/boston. 250 Franklin St., 02110. State Street or Downtown Crossing T stop. 326 rooms, 22 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

The Lenox Hotel (p. 29) BACK BAY Small enough to be personal, large enough to appeal to business travelers; the early-20th-century vibe starts with the top-hatted doormen and elaborate lobby. Book a room with a fireplace and cuddle up.... *Tel 617/536-5300 (800/225-7676). Fax 617/236-0351. www.lenoxhotel.com. 61 Exeter St., 02116. Copley T stop. 212 rooms, 3 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

Marriott Residence Inn Boston Harbor (p. 24) CHARLESTOWN The excellent location, full breakfast, and kitchenettes make this new hotel a magnet for businesspeople working on long-term projects. Families flock here on weekends. Great views, especially from units that face the harbor.... *Tel 617/242-9000 (866/296-2297, 800/331-3131). Fax 617/242-5554. www.marriottresidenceinnbostonharbor.com. 44 Charles River Ave., Charlestown 02129. North Station T stop or ferry from Long Wharf (Aquarium T stop) to Charlestown Navy Yard. 168 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

The MidTown Hotel (p. 20) BACK BAY Inexpensive, if not glamorous, this is one step up from a motel. Reasonably large rooms, an outdoor pool, and free parking make it a bargain.... *Tel 617/262-1000 (800/343-1177). Fax 617/262-8739. www.midtownhotel.com. 220 Huntington Ave., 02115. Prudential or Massachusetts Ave. T stop. 159 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

Millennium Bostonian Hotel (p. 27) GOVERNMENT CENTER This unusual small hotel offers plenty of business features that contrast with its boutique ambience..... *Tel 617/523-3600 (800/343-0922). Fax 617/523-2454. www.milleniumhotels.com. Faneuil Hall Marketplace, 26 North St., 02109. Government Center or Haymarket T stop. 201 rooms, 13 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

Newbury Guest House (p. 22) BACK BAY A sure winner from the day it opened in 1991, this handsomely furnished B&B in a phenomenal location includes continental breakfast in its rates. Reserve your parking spot ($15 for 24 hours—a bargain) in advance.... *Tel 617/437-7666 (800/437-7668). Fax 617/262-4243. www.newburyguesthouse.com. 261 Newbury St., 02116. Hynes/ICA or Copley T stop. 32 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

Nine Zero (p. 16) DOWNTOWN Trendy, upscale travelers head here for peace, quiet, and service. Sink into down comforters and pillows, turn on the music, and the frenzy of Boston disappears. Great location, too.... *Tel 617/772-5800 (866/NINE-ZERO). Fax 617/772-5810. www.ninezerohotel.com. 90 Tremont St., 02108. Park Street T stop. 189 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

Omni Parker House (p. 17) DOWNTOWN This 19th-century classic regularly updates its appointments but not its atmosphere. Clever configurations and custom furnishings make small rooms feel bigger.... *Tel 617/227-8600 (800/843-6664). Fax 617/742-5729. www.omnihotels.com. 60 School St., 02108. Government Center or Park St. T stop. 551 rooms, 21 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

Onyx Hotel (p. 17) NORTH STATION This spanking-new boutique hotel is under the same ownership as the equally delightful Marlowe and decorated with great flair. Request a room with a floor-to-ceiling window and spy on the neighbors.... *Tel 617/557-9955 (866/660-6699, 800/KIMPTON). www.onyxhotel.com. 155 Portland St., 02114. North Station T stop. 112 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

Radisson Hotel Boston (p. 27) THEATER DISTRICT Huge rooms, all with balconies, in a convenient location. Very popular with

tour groups and, increasingly, business travelers.... *Tel 617/482-1800 (800/333-3333). Fax 617/451-2750. www.radisson.com/bostonma 200 Stuart St., 02116. Boylston or New England Medical Center T stop. 350 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

The Ritz-Carlton, Boston **(p. 18)** BACK BAY The traditional place to stay in Boston, if you have the cash. Extensive renovations that wrapped up in 2002 left the whole building in superb condition, but by 21st-century standards, some of the vintage 1927 rooms are on the small side.... *Tel 617/536-5700 (800/241-3333). Fax 617/536-1335. www.ritzcarlton.com. 15 Arlington St., 02116. Arlington T stop. 273 rooms, 48 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

The Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common **(p. 18)** THEATER DISTRICT Lots of business travelers on expense accounts check into the newest Ritz on the block. Rooms with views of Boston Common cost even more than the pricey standard units.... *Tel 617/574-7100 (800/241-3333). Fax 617/574-7200. www.ritzcarlton.com. 10 Avery St., 02111. Boylston T stop. 193 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

Royal Sonesta Hotel **(p. 22)** CAMBRIDGE This fun hotel on the Charles River is close to shops and museums and has excellent family packages. Guest rooms have museum-quality artwork from the hotel's own collection.... *Tel 617/806-4200 (800/SONESTA). Fax 617/806-4232. www.sonesta.com/boston. 5 Cambridge Pkwy., Cambridge 02142. Lechmere T stop. 400 rooms, 24 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

Seaport Hotel **(p. 22)** SOUTH BOSTON WATERFRONT A high-rise magnet for conventioneers, it's across from the World Trade Center and near the new convention center in a neighborhood plagued by construction. Rooms have great views of Boston Harbor or the city skyline.... *Tel 617/385-4000 (877/SEAPORT). Fax 617/385-5090. www.seaporthotel.com. 1 Seaport Lane, 02210. South Station T stop and shuttle bus, or ferry from Lovejoy Wharf to North Station. 426 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

Sheraton Boston Hotel **(p. 21)** BACK BAY In a great location next door to the Hynes Convention Center, the Sheraton has a big indoor/outdoor pool and sleigh beds. Higher floors in the 29-story tower afford splendid views..... *Tel 617/236-2000 (800/325-3535). Fax 617/236-1702. www.sheraton.com/boston. 39 Dalton St., 02199. Prudential or Hynes/ICA T stop. 1,215 rooms, 144 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

The Westin Copley Place Boston (p. 20) BACK BAY Rooms in this 36-story tower (all above the 7th floor) are top-class business generic, with oak and mahogany Colonial-style furniture. Thick towels, thick carpets, pillow-top beds, and awesome city views.... *Tel 617/262-9600 (800/WESTIN-1). Fax 617/424-7483. www.westin.com/copleyplace. 10 Huntington Ave., 02116. Copley or Back Bay T stop. 803 rooms, 45 suites. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

Wyndham Boston (p. 28) DOWNTOWN The gorgeously rehabbed former office building continues to attract businesspeople during the week. Sightseers come for the weekend packages.... *Tel 617/556-0006 (800/WYNDHAM). Fax 617/556-0053. www.wyndham.com. 89 Broad St., 02110. State St. T stop. 362 rooms. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

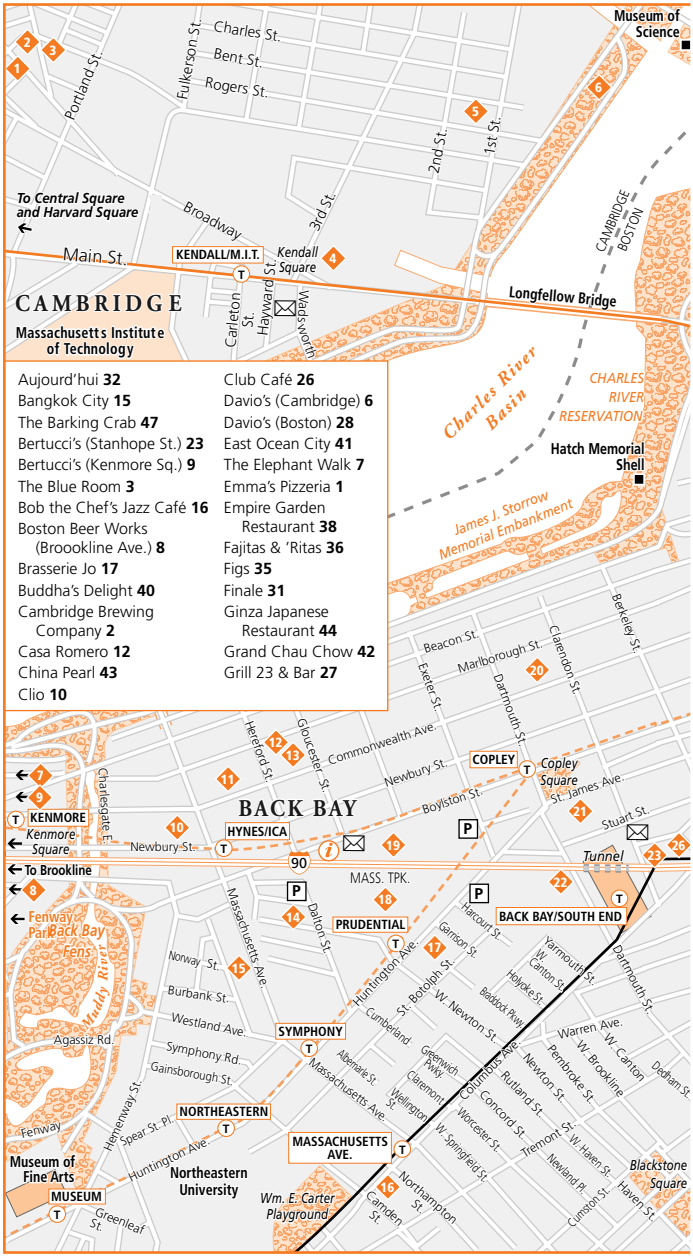
YWCA Boston, Berkeley Residence (p. 20) SOUTH END This women-only facility offers small, basic rooms and a TV lounge but no air-conditioning.... *Tel 617/375-2524. Fax 617/375-2525. www.ywcaboston.org. 40 Berkeley St., 02116. Back Bay or Arlington T stop. 200 rooms with shared baths. AE, DISC, DC not accepted. MC, V. $*


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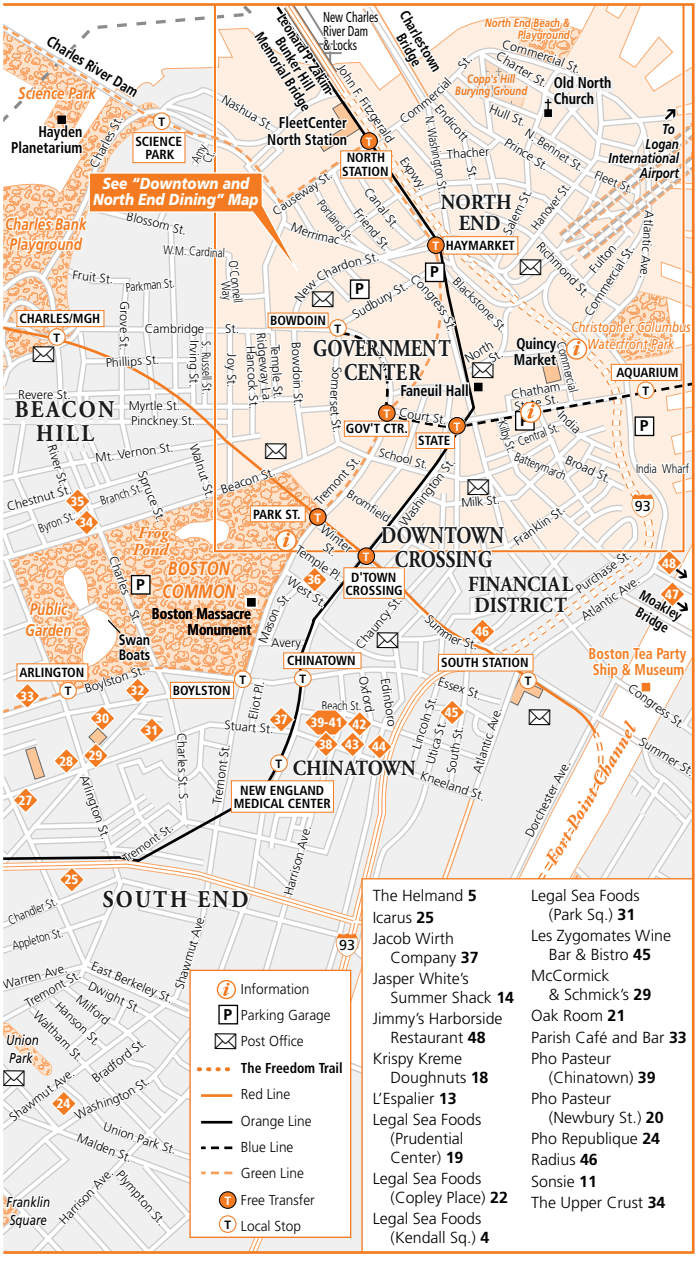
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2

Map 3: Boston Orientation—Dining



Aujourd'hui **32**
Bangkok City **15**
The Barking Crab **47**
Bertucci's (Stanhope St.) **23**
Bertucci's (Kenmore Sq.) **9**
The Blue Room **3**
Bob the Chef's Jazz Café **16**
Boston Beer Works (Broookline Ave.) **8**
Brasserie Jo **17**
Buddha's Delight **40**
Cambridge Brewing Company **2**
Casa Romero **12**
China Pearl **43**
Clio **10**
Club Café **26**
Davio's (Cambridge) **6**
Davio's (Boston) **28**
East Ocean City **41**
The Elephant Walk **7**
Emma's Pizzeria **1**
Empire Garden Restaurant **38**
Fajitas & 'Ritas **36**
Figs **35**
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Ginza Japanese Restaurant **44**
Grand Chau Chow **42**
Grill 23 & Bar **27**



The Helmand **5**
Icarus **25**
Jacob Wirth Company **37**
Jasper White's Summer Shack **14**
Jimmy's Harborside Restaurant **48**
Krispy Kreme Doughnuts **18**
L'Espalier **13**
Legal Sea Foods (Prudential Center) **19**
Legal Sea Foods (Copley Place) **22**
Legal Sea Foods (Kendall Sq.) **4**
Legal Sea Foods (Park Sq.) **31**
Les Zygomates Wine Bar & Bistro **45**
McCormick & Schmick's **29**
Oak Room **21**
Parish Café and Bar **33**
Pho Pasteur (Chinatown) **39**
Pho Pasteur (Newbury St.) **20**
Pho Republique **24**
Radius **46**
Sonsie **11**
The Upper Crust **34**

Basic Stuff

Something's fishy in Boston. Boston baked beans, Boston cream pie, and New England clam chowder may be the first culinary terms that come to mind when you hear "Boston," but consult a map before you faint into your low-carb lunch. Just look at all that water!

It's full of fish and shellfish, and the Boston area is full of chefs who know exactly what to do with that bounty. Seafood from the Atlantic and from around the world is available raw, boiled, broiled, grilled, baked, smoked, and deep-fried, in the full range of styles from unadorned to elaborate. For every celebrity chef presiding over a nationally renowned kitchen, there are scores of ethnic cooks preparing childhood recipes from Bologna, Beijing, Bombay, and Ballyshannon.

Not a seafood fan? Not to worry. You'll find plenty of steakhouses, veggie-friendly cafes, top-notch hotel dining rooms, and pizza parlors. A quirk of licensing laws makes it easier to serve liquor if you also serve food, which means ordinary-looking watering holes often feature surprisingly good grub. As in any other large city, trends come and go; a constant here—thanks to all those student budgets—is the affordable ethnic restaurant. And those world-beat flavors inevitably find their way onto the menus at even the most sparkly special-occasion restaurants. Boston dining can be formal or casual, straightforward or spicy, but it's never boring.

Only in Boston

Lobster, shellfish, and scrod (fresh whitefish) are the local seafood specialties; creamy New England clam chowder, made with potatoes and onions and no tomatoes, is also available everywhere. Yankee cuisine—not the oxymoron you might think—involves seafood, prime rib, pork chops, baked beans, and heavy puddings. You can find it at traditional restaurants, the best of which is Durgin-Park. The local brew that made good, Samuel Adams, comes in many varieties, most of them dark and tasty. Those who prefer British beers to pallid American thirst-quenchers will like Sam Adams' concoctions; lager fans may enjoy Sam's Summer Ale.

How to Dress

Most restaurants don't care what you wear, as long as it covers all of your swimsuit areas. Some fancier places require jacket and tie; at others, the dress code is "jacket preferred"—which

means you can wind up celebrating your special occasion next to a grown man in a hoodie.

Where (Not) to Smoke

Massachusetts forbids smoking in all workplaces, including restaurants. But some restaurants' outdoor seating areas get so smoky that nonsmokers are all but forced to sit inside. If you're not a fan of that do-it-yourself-barbecue flavor, scope out the patio and quiz the hostess or host before opting for an alfresco table.

When to Eat

Lunch is usually cheaper than dinner, with a similar or identical menu; it's a good option if you're on a budget. To avoid crowds and perhaps have the option of ordering an early-bird special, join the families and seniors who eat dinner before 6pm. After 7pm, you may have to wait for a table if you don't have a reservation. At most restaurants, the tables are wiped and polished by 11pm, when good God-fearing Yankees are already in bed.

Practicalities

At restaurants that accept reservations, always book ahead. Ask for a table by the window, ask for a booth, ask for a seat by the fire—and arrive at the appointed hour. If you're driving, leave early, because parking can take a while. Ask about the availability and cost of parking when you make reservations. If there's no parking (and there probably isn't), there may be expensive—as much as $20—valet parking or inexpensive validated parking at a local garage. And if you already have a reservation at the subject of one of the *Globe*'s two weekly reviews, which appear in the Thursday Calendar section, hats off to you. If you don't, go somewhere—anywhere—else.

Where the Chefs Are

Gross generalization: If the website is the chef's name rather than the restaurant's, all that publicity has probably gone to someone's head. We tend to favor chefs who rank food above fame. A few prime examples: Jody Adams of Rialto, a sublime splash of the Mediterranean in Harvard Square; Frank McClelland, who serves inventive New England-meets-France cuisine at L'Espalier; Boston native Barbara Lynch of No. 9 Park, a shrine to pasta and French country fare; Ian Just of Les Zygomates Wine Bar & Bistro, perhaps the most Parisian of Boston restaurants (with live jazz, to boot); Michael Schlow of Radius,

who takes everyday dishes like mussels to daring heights; and Ana Sortun of Oleana, a neighborhood place in Cambridge with a Mediterranean vibe. That's not to say that all the big names are too busy taping TV shows to dance with the girl they brought: Jasper White's Summer Shack is the illogical but delightful next step by a chef who made his name in pricey fine dining and now presides over a place where many of the patrons sit at indoor picnic tables. (And as if to prove our theory, his name is in the name of the restaurant but not in the web address. Aha!)

The Lowdown

Where to trap a lobster... It never fails: We're ready with a laundry list of suggestions, but the hungry friends-of-a-friend just want directions to the nearest lobster. Hold out for the best and head to Legal Sea Foods. No, a well-known chain isn't the deep, dark secret out-of-towners expect, but Legal's is famous for the best possible reason—it's great. On the Freedom Trail, Ye Olde Union Oyster House is a top choice for a traditional clambake (lobster dinner with all the trimmings). In Cambridge, **Jasper White's Summer Shack** is a clam shack with a college education, and its pan-roasted lobster, adopted from Jasper's now-defunct fine-dining restaurant on the Boston waterfront, is the valedictorian.

Something fishy in town... Once a little Cambridge seafood store, **Legal Sea Foods** is now a chain that even has a few links beyond New England. It's justly famous for a vast variety of superfresh fish ("if it isn't fresh, it isn't Legal") cooked any way you want it. Far from coasting on its reputation, Legal constantly improves and expands its menu; in recent years it has added chowder options, shaken up its predictable desserts, and turned its wine list into a worthy competitor for any other cellar in town. **Ye Olde Union Oyster House,** established in 1826, was popular with Daniel Webster, and so beloved by John F. Kennedy that a plaque marks his favorite booth, no. 18. This is not the place to be adventuresome—stick to traditional seafood dishes, such as succulent oyster stew, and you won't be disappointed. If you mainly want to savor the Oyster House's history, snack at the raw bar and drink a beer downstairs. For a different take on seafood, **Grand Chau Chow** in

Chinatown serves fish so fresh that it might still be swimming (in the tanks scattered around the dining room) when you arrive. Shellfish is another specialty; clams in black-bean sauce is one of the restaurant's signature dishes.

Something fishy in a shack... Only in New England would one of America's top chefs turn his attention to the lowly clam shack. But there it is, miles from the shore, across the street from a Cambridge subway station: **Jasper White's Summer Shack.** In an ultra-casual setting (you may wind up seated at a picnic table), the Summer Shack serves the full range of summer favorites, such as lobster rolls, hot dogs, corn dogs(!), and all manner of seafood, plus what the menu accurately calls "big-bucks lobster." Arrive early to snag a table on the slightly elevated and slightly quieter upper level. Or head to the smaller Summer Shack in the Back Bay, which has a shorter menu (and no giant lobster tank) but the full range of raw-bar options. Also in Boston, the **Barking Crab** perches on the edge of Fort Point Channel. Order seafood at the window, then dine at a wooden picnic table while watching fishing boats prepare for the next morning's outing. Compared with offerings at restaurants that have walls, the large seafood platters here, with fries, coleslaw, and corn, are a bargain. A friend bearing a tattered copy of the best-selling book *1,000 Places to See Before You Die* arrived at our door demanding a meal at **Woodman's of Essex,** and we jumped at the chance. The place where patriarch "Chubby" Woodman reputedly invented the fried clam (in 1916), Woodman's is the classic seafood-in-the-rough wood shack writ large. Fried-clam aficionados endlessly debate the virtues of Woodman's and the **Clam Box,** in Ipswich. Cunningly shaped like a box of clams, the Clam Box offers superb fried clams; we rank it behind Woodman's because its menu is shorter (and it's closed in the winter, when a taste of fried seafood can be the perfect antidote to cabin fever).

Something fishy by the sea... The pick of the restaurants on and near the Boston Fish Pier, off construction-choked Northern Avenue in South Boston, is **Jimmy's Harborside Restaurant.** Founded in 1924, it's a welcoming, family-run place with big harbor-view windows in a vast, rectangular, three-tiered dining room where everyone

can see the water. At lunch, this is power-broker central—the U.S. Senate doesn't have this many white-haired white guys with power ties and hyper-sincere handshakes. At dinner, local families who've celebrated special occasions here for generations mingle with the tourists. Specialties include fish chowder (Jimmy was the "Chowder King"), lobster, finnan haddie, arctic char, and tuna kebab. The walk from South Station to Northern Avenue is a dusty, uninspiring, 30-minute trek. Take a taxi or drive: This is one of the only places in Boston where it's fairly easy to park on your own, and Jimmy's has valet service, too.

Something fishy and raw... Sushi aficionados (especially those who hail from landlocked locales) are in for a treat here by the Atlantic. At our favorites, kimono-clad waitresses serve seafood so fresh you want to slap it. Furthermore, we always assume that if we hear a lot of conversations in the language of the cuisine, we've come to the right place; at any of these, you might easily pick up a little Japanese. **Ginza Japanese Restaurant** branched out from Chinatown to suburban Brookline, not far from the Boston border. It has perhaps the most inventive maki menu in the area, excellent lunch specialties, and (in Chinatown) a fabulous late-night scene. The original location is cozy and rather dark; the Beacon Street branch, with walls of windows on two sides, is livelier. **Fugakyu,** an enormous restaurant near Coolidge Corner in Brookline, draws crowds from all over with its lively decor and enormous menu. If you have to wait for a table, take your beeper into the compact bar and treat it to an exotic cocktail.

Something fishy on the cheap... Cheap fish is usually a reason to smell a rat, so to speak. But not always. In an effort to combat drunk driving, Massachusetts long ago outlawed happy hour—for drinkers. Restaurants that cut appetizer prices at the bar in the evening are well within the law, and **McCormick & Schmick's Seafood Restaurant** is the attorney general of what it calls social hour (at the Park Plaza location). This is your big chance to hear "discounted oysters" followed by "yum" rather than "emergency room."

For oyster lovers... The best feature of **Ye Olde Union Oyster House** is the raw bar. On a busy Saturday, the

shuckers serve over 3,000 oysters. **Brasserie Jo** offers a tower of seafood that includes sublime oysters, and **No. 9 Park** serves oysters with mignonette sauce so good you'll want to pour it over your breakfast cereal.

Landmarks... **Durgin-Park** in Faneuil Hall Marketplace opened in 1827, and simply by maintaining its high quality and informal (read: inexpensive) style in an area that has become increasingly touristy (read: pricey), the restaurant has become a legend. The servers, mostly smart-mouthed waitresses who can out-sass the cheekiest child, are part of the experience. Diners eat family style at long tables with red-and-white-checked tablecloths—you may sit next to seniors wearing trolley-tour stickers, bureaucrats from city hall, or a group of hungry students. (You can also ask for a smaller table.) Generous portions of seafood, prime rib, turkey, and onion rings are served with hunks of corn bread and pitchers of ice water. Get to know your fellow out-of-towners while you wait downstairs in the line for seats—savvy locals have a drink in the ground-floor bar and jump the line. Nearby, the **Union Oyster House** is a year older and equally beloved by a crowd that expects a more sedate dining experience. **Jacob Wirth Company** dates from 1868; having survived two world wars and Prohibition, it must be doing something right. A long mahogany bar dominates the room; Bavarian brew, Rhenish wine, and hearty dishes abound at what's basically a German beer hall. A classic Boston bar is **Doyle's,** established in 1882. Don't be fazed by its location in a distant section of Jamaica Plain—Bostonians flock here from all over. Dining is mainly at high wooden booths beneath plaster moldings and ceiling fans. The walls sport old newspaper clippings and a mural showing famed politicos like Ted Kennedy. Stick to traditional pub fare (potato skins, fish and chips, onion rings, steaks), or bear the consequences of ordering quiche in a bar.

For special occasions... Not a "supersize it" special occasion, but a "lavish meal at a breathtakingly expensive restaurant" special occasion. The Boston area abounds with possible destinations; the top two are in the Back Bay. In an elegant 1880 town house off Newbury Street, **L'Espalier** offers an entrancing combination of cuisine, atmosphere, and service. Seasonal organic products from local purveyors figure prominently in the regularly changing

menu, but it's not limited to those—you might see wild Alaskan salmon, Amish chicken, or cheese from a boutiquey sheep or goat farm, and there's always a caviar selection. More important, the imaginative kitchen knows just what to do with all those interesting ingredients; namely, turn them into unforgettable dishes served by an impeccable waitstaff. **Aujourd'hui** is also famous for its service, which is formal but warm; make sure you say it's an occasion when you make your reservation. The menu here is a bit less inventive—it is a hotel dining room, after all—but the food is superb and the setting perhaps the loveliest in Boston. Overlooking the Public Garden, the newly renovated dining room feels a bit like an indoor garden, thanks in part to all those luxury-hotel flower arrangements.

Isn't it romantic... It can be tough to pinpoint what makes a restaurant romantic. Decor, lighting, food, and service are important, but that elusive vibe is the make-or-break element. **Icarus,** in the South End, gets it just right. The food is amazing, with lots of local products and a palette of flavors that defies categorization—call it sophisticated yet yummy. The service is friendly but never overfamiliar. The subterranean dining room is stylish, with lots of dark wood and elegant accents, and one surefire conversation starter—the tables, chairs, china, and silver don't match. Maybe it's the fact that you enter through an alley, but **Casa Romero** feels deliciously naughty. Filled with flowers, woven wall hangings, and wrought iron, the look is Old Mexico. The food is lusty, smoky, real Mexican fare, like mole poblano or tenderloin of pork glazed with oranges and chipotle peppers. If you can't afford that Riviera honeymoon but want to pretend you're in Italy anyway, go to the North End and try **Mamma Maria,** a stunning restaurant in a converted town house on historic North Square. It has several intimate, dimly lit dining rooms (one seats just two people) and an imaginative Italian menu.

For same-sex romance... This is Massachusetts—there's same-sex romance everywhere (and a 3-day waiting period for a marriage license, FYI). The South End's **Club Cafe** is a popular establishment where singles are always welcome and the men at the bar are glorious to look at, even those who (whatever your gender or orientation) are batting for the other team.

Kid pleasers... The local chain **Bertucci's** has great pizza and pastas and caters to kids—it's our favorite family restaurant. Children get (genuine) Play-Doh, crayons, and spill-proof cardboard drink cartons. What's more, the plates are unbreakable, and the waitstaff both speedy and patient. Faneuil Hall Marketplace's **Durgin-Park,** with its noisy, lively atmosphere and picnic-like tables, is another good bet. If your kids like seafood, try the outdoor **Barking Crab,** where they can wander about and make as much noise as they like. In Chinatown, **Grand Chau Chow** has high chairs, super-speedy service, and so much activity the tots will be mesmerized. Baby wants baby-back ribs? **Redbones** in Somerville offers a kiddie menu.

See-and-be-seen scenes... For over a decade, Boston's premier beautiful-people-watching spot has been **Sonsie** on Newbury Street. Snag a table near the French doors that open to the sidewalk; a familiarity with the latest issue of *Vogue* will serve you well. Service can be sluggish, but the food is good, from pan-roasted fish to Boston's favorite break-up meal, Angry Pizza (hot sausage, hot peppers, not-so-hot breath, but who cares?). Go figure—**Davio's,** also in the Back Bay, wasn't much of a scene in its previous location on Newbury Street. Now that it's in nominally less fashionable Park Square, it's a magnet for a chic crowd that sometimes includes out-of-town pro athletes. **Radius,** near South Station, is a buttoned-up business destination at lunch; it undergoes a Clark Kent–like transformation after work and attracts a crowd that fits in better with the sleek contemporary setting. Look the other way if a fit of political incorrectness will bug you: The best boy- and girl-watching in town is, somewhat improbably, at the park in Post Office Square at lunch when the weather's fine. Hit the **Milk Street Cafe** kiosk for some sustenance, head to the adorable little patch of green, and check out the hotties from all over downtown.

Crankiest waitstaff... **Durgin-Park's** waitresses are renowned for their rudeness, but more often they're humorous, good-natured, and a little bossy. At least they call you "hon" when they order you to set your own table.

Barbecue joints... Ride the Red Line straight to Memphis—no, wait, it's Somerville, a slightly downscale neighbor

of Cambridge. Sniff the air around Davis Square and follow your nose to **Redbones.** Barbecued ribs—Memphis, Texas, or Arkansas style—share the menu and the devoted customers' affections with catfish, chicken, brisket, pulled pork, and a festival of appetizers. The vast beer menu includes everything from wussy American lagers to the finest handcrafted boutique brews. A former bar lavishly decorated with posters and photos, Redbones draws huge crowds, especially on weekends. If you're not in a party mood when you arrive, just wait. The **East Coast Grill & Raw Bar** is another celebrated destination for barbecue (and a good choice if fish-lovers or vegetarians are along), and the **Midwest Grill** serves a Brazilian version.

Beer here... The **Cambridge Brewing Company** offers a small but fine selection of beers—try Charles River Porter, Tall Tale Pale Ale, or a seasonal brew such as pumpkin (sounds gross, tastes great). The varied New American menu is surprisingly good dressed-up bar food, and portions are ample. **Boston Beer Works,** with locations across from Fenway Park and around the corner from the FleetCenter, is a good place to visit before or after a game. Each location features more than a dozen home-brewed selections on tap, usually including cask-conditioned brews that have been pampered like fine wines.

Grill out, dude... Cambridge has at least three excellent restaurants with "grill" in their names. An Inman Square landmark, the **East Coast Grill & Raw Bar** is a riotous celebration of seafood and barbecue. Founder Chris Schlesinger, though no longer behind the stove, is a celebrated author whose specialties are grilling and spicy, flavorful cuisine. He created a colorful, loud place that looks deceptively casual—this is world-class seafood, and the barbecue is nearly in that league. In addition to masterful preparations featuring whatever looked good at the fish market that morning, the kitchen cranks out three styles of barbecue and periodically schedules "From Hell!" nights that challenge even the most asbestos-mouthed diner. The **Green Street Grill** has a cooler vibe—it retained its regulars through a renovation that left the Central Square neighborhood tavern looking more like a funky art gallery. On a drab side street, you'd never expect the sunny flavors of the Caribbean—though the cool music (blues, jazz, alt

rock) that starts after dinner fits right in. The **Midwest Grill,** also in Inman Square, is an all-you-can-eat Brazilian barbecue (grilled meat) palace.

Haute hotel... Many critics consider the elegant **Aujourd'hui** at the Four Seasons the best hotel dining room in New England. We give the nod to **Rialto,** at the Charles Hotel in Cambridge. Chef Jody Adams, a star who's been associated with several excellent local restaurants, surpasses herself here with a southern European menu focusing on French, Italian, and Spanish cuisine. The seasonal menu features an abundance of local ingredients approached with a Mediterranean philosophy of emphasizing flavors rather than showy technique. The lovely dining room overlooking Harvard Square feels almost like a plush living room, and service is excellent. For sheer dazzlement, it's tough to beat **Clio** at the Eliot Hotel. Ken Oringer's menu features unusual accents in everything from the exotic (sea urchin) to the mundane (roast pork), all prepared to perfection, with a vaguely Asian twist. He used to be a pastry chef—check the dessert menu. The **Oak Room** at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel is an ultra-traditional steak-and-seafood dining room. Sometimes a touch of nutmeg in the creamed spinach is the raciest ingredient on the menu, but this is a favorite with grandparents and carnivores for a reason.

Cheap eats... Two of the best dining bargains around are in pricey Harvard Square. **Mr. Bartley's Burger Cottage** is a local legend for its big, juicy burgers with topical names (usually of politicians and celebrities). It's not a cottage, but a high-ceilinged space decorated with posters, road signs, and photos, and so close to campus that it's practically a Harvard dining hall. Nearby **Johnny's Luncheonette** is a throwback in decor—it looks like an overgrown '50s diner—but not in the quality of its casual, family-friendly food. Bounteous omelets and other tasty breakfast selections share the menu with salads, sandwiches, incredible sweet-potato fries, and all-American dinners such as turkey or meatloaf with all the trimmings. The service is warm even at the busiest times—like all weekend long. For ethnic food that won't bust your budget, acquaint yourself with the area's many Indian, Chinese, and pizza places, or try **Anna's Taqueria** in Brookline and Cambridge for cheap Mexican food to go.

The great outdoors... Bundle up in the spring and fall—cold and wind don't stop Bostonians from dining alfresco. As problematic as the famously capricious weather is the layout at many places that don't seem to care about exposing patrons to more exhaust fumes than a mechanic doing emissions inspections. Courtyards are the best option; you'll find exceptionally pleasant ones at **Oleana** in Cambridge and **Casa Romero** in the Back Bay. Sidewalk seating set back from traffic or screened by planters (or both) is a decent alternative; join the lively scene at the **Parish Cafe** or **Brasserie Jo** in the Back Bay. Perhaps best of all, grab a picnic and head to a park, the banks of the Charles River, or a seat facing the scene on the harbor. Likely launching points include **Figs** and the **Upper Crust** on Beacon Hill, the **Milk Street Cafe** and **Chacarero** downtown, and the food court in Quincy Market at Faneuil Hall Marketplace (see the Diversions chapter).

For committed carnivores... The **Midwest Grill** in Cambridge serves *rodizio,* or Brazilian barbecue. That translates as garlicky, succulent meat—beef, pork, lamb, and sausage, plus chicken and chicken hearts—grilled over an open fire on 3-foot skewers. The dishy waiters circulate, skewers in hand, and bring you as much protein as you want. Carbs are up to you; serve yourself from the selection of tasty side dishes. You'll see hungry students who appreciate the all-you-can-eat pricing structure and Brazilian families who like the down-home vibe in the two colorful, aromatic dining rooms. In a money-is-no-object parallel universe, **Grill 23 & Bar** in the Back Bay is Boston's best steakhouse. The former trading floor of the **Salada Tea Building** (check out the elephants on the Stuart Street facade) retains a businesslike air, with lots of wood paneling and shiny brass accents. The chops and steaks—including Kobe beef—are big and juicy, the wine list excellent, and the noise level unbelievable. The **Oak Room** at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel is equally grand but much calmer and quieter. **Redbones** in Somerville is famous for its barbecue, ribs, and 10 types of sausage. Various combo platters let diners try varied styles all on the same plate. The area's most famous meat restaurant is a 20-minute drive north of Boston on Route 1, in the unlikely town of Saugus. An even unlikelier herd of life-size plastic cows grazes outside the enormous **Hilltop Steak House,** which

seats 1,500, cooks great steak, and always has a (long) line. The retro experience is big with older folks—well, it's not retro for them—as well as curious yuppies and value-conscious families.

Vegging out... Vegetarians in the Boston area will never go hungry—they won't even have to subsist on salads. For purists, there's **Veggie Planet,** inside folkie mecca Club Passim in Harvard Square. The subterranean restaurant features whole-grain flatbreads, soups, salads, and gooey, good-for-you vegetarian and vegan pizza. **Buddha's Delight** in Chinatown is equally virtuous but less devoted to self-denial—you're allowed to admit you miss meat. It doesn't use any animal products in its flavorful Vietnamese creations (other than milk in a handful of beverages), but the kitchen transforms tofu and gluten into more-than-passable "pork," "chicken," and "seafood." The **Milk Street Cafe** downtown is kosher as well as vegetarian, but most patrons are neither. Vegetarian options so tasty that they can lure confirmed meat-eaters over to the green side area are available at many omnivorous restaurants, and not just the usual budget ethnic places. **The Helmand** has a whole vegetarian section on its enticing menu of Afghan cuisine. The kitchen at the **Elephant Walk** will substitute tofu for the protein in many of its tasty French and Cambodian dishes. A selection of the **East Coast Grill's** scrumptious sides is available as a main course, and the **Blue Room** always has an excellent vegetarian option.

Global harmony... With the fusion craze going the way of countless other ill-advised trends, the surviving cross-cultural restaurants look even better. A great example is the **Elephant Walk,** in Boston (near the Brookline border) and Cambridge. The menu is French on one side, Cambodian on the other, and terrific from top to bottom. This is an excellent choice for risk-taking diners with less adventuresome friends—chicken with fresh pineapple, Asian basil, bamboo shoots, and lemongrass for one; peppercorn-crusted tuna for the other. If you don't want to confine yourself to two cuisines, other restaurants with wide-ranging menus include **Sonsie, Clio, the Blue Room,** and **Icarus.**

Solo practitioners... Maybe you prefer your Asian food straight up. The perfect antidote to a raw New England

day is an enormous, steaming bowl of Vietnamese pho (pronounced "fuh"). The noodle soup, aromatic and laden with fresh vegetables, chicken, and even meatballs, is the specialty at the **Pho Pasteur** mini-chain. All the branches are good; we like the Newbury Street location, nestled among good galleries and chi-chi shops. **Pho Republique** (no relation) is on a stretch of Washington Street in the South End with a thriving dining scene. "Scene" is definitely the word for the dining room, decorated in shades of red, and especially for the bar, which attracts a chic crowd of diners and drinkers. They're not dripping soup on their designer finery, either—the flavorful finger food here is as appealing as the powerful cocktails. In Harvard Square, **Bombay Club** serves some of the best Indian food west of London. It's not the usual Formica-and-paper-napkin hole-in-the-wall but a large, elegant room overlooking Harvard Square. The sauces are exquisite, the tandoori crisp but tender, and the breads delicious. Not as stylish but definitely delicious is **India Pavilion** in Central Square. Reputedly the oldest Indian restaurant in the Boston area, it serves mostly northern Indian food with some southern dishes. **Bangkok City,** near Symphony Hall, serves the best Thai food for miles around. The ornately decorated dining room is a capsule of calm in a frantic neighborhood. In addition to the usual noodle and curry dishes, the menu has a section that lets you pick your own combination of protein and sauce. If you need advice, ask for the Thai menu, a single sheet with a whittled-down list of the best options.

Spaghetti-and-meatball Italian... The Southern Italian restaurants in the North End all start to look and smell alike after a while, but some taste better than others. **Piccola Venezia,** where you dine beneath oil paintings of Venetian gondolas, is one of the good ones. It serves generous portions of tasty traditional Italian-American favorites (think lasagna and chicken parm). Ectomorphs will want to look into "the Godfather platter"—a feast fit for Marlon Brando, with veal and chicken cutlets, eggplant parmigiana, meatballs, sausage, peppers, and pasta. Garlic and seafood are the watchwords at the **Daily Catch,** a pocket-sized enclave on Hanover Street. It's so small that the waitress can show you dishes on the other tables instead of describing them. The specialty is squid—the awning says CALAMARI CAFE—but everything's delicious.

Even though it's mostly a seafood restaurant, it does serve meatballs; the bounteous calamari platter includes a squid meatball (seriously).

Arugula-and-radicchio Italian... The North End became less than half Italian-American within the past decade, and the dining scene is evolving, too. **Mamma Maria,** a beautiful restaurant in a town house near the Paul Revere House, serves delicious new Italian cuisine in striking surroundings. The menu includes homemade pasta, seasonal local produce, and superb seafood; one signature dish is awe-inspiring osso buco. The unfailingly inventive kitchen, romantic setting, and gracious service make it easy to forget that you're within shouting distance of tons of garlic bread. Off the main Hanover Street drag, **Sage** is a little refuge from the straw-covered-Chianti-bottle scene; chef-owner Anthony Susi gets better known every day for his nouveau Italian-American-French creations.

Pie in the sky... The culinary roulette wheel has come up red, as in tomato sauce—thin-crust gourmet pizza is an everything-old-is-new-again fave. **Figs,** with locations on Beacon Hill and in Charlestown, is a longtime favorite for its flavorful crust (from the wood-fired oven) and imaginative toppings. Eat early or late, or be prepared to wait. **The Upper Crust,** just up the street from the Beacon Hill Figs branch (upper crust, indeed), is an interloper with one communal table, long lines, and its own enthusiastic supporters. It also has a Brookline location. In Cambridge, the intelligentsia agrees on one thing: **Emma's Pizzeria** makes the best thin-crust pie around. Do as the devout do and plan ahead: Order your Saturday night pizza at noon to avoid eternal waits. For the original thin-crust experience, head to the Italian-American North End and seek out **Pizzeria Regina,** where the waitresses will probably call you "dear." Let the steaming-hot pizza cool a little, or watch out. Now the flagship of a little chain, the original dates to 1926—it's a Boston classic.

The tastiest Tex-Mex... **The Border Cafe** in Harvard Square has fans who claim it's the best Mexican restaurant north of Mexico. They're probably faint from hunger—the wait for a table can be that long—but it is awfully good food in an irresistible setting. Portions are big, prices are

little, and the overworked staff serves with flair. Order the mountainous, sizzling Cadillac fajitas and stuff 'em in. The fruity margaritas are legendary. Beer is served from an ice-filled, claw-footed bathtub. The problem? The wait. The answer? Leave your name at 6:30pm, collect your free beeper, and then shop at nearby bookstores until it buzzes (it could take 2 hours on a Sat). When you just can't wait, **Anna's Taqueria** in Brookline and Cambridge serves cheap and generous portions of Mexican home cooking to go. **Fajitas & 'Ritas,** downtown, is pleasantly quirky. You order off a menu-cum-checklist that lists numerous options for ingredients and trimmings in fajitas, burritos, quesadillas, and nachos, plus excellent margaritas.

Mex without the Tex... For a Mexican fix in the Back Bay, try the quiet **Casa Romero.** The tiny, flower-filled courtyard with its terra-cotta fountain is perfect on summery evenings; unusual sauces give the dishes a unique flavor, and who could resist cactus salad? A caveat: The basic (cheapo) margaritas are harsh, even for veteran tequila tipplers. **Tu y Yo Mexican Fonda** (a *fonda* is a boardinghouse) serves homey Mexican food prepared using old family recipes. Hidden away in Somerville, it makes a great introduction to authentic flavors and ingredients in dishes so good that they may make you forget the directions to the local Tex-Mex drive-through. Sangria makes a perfect accompaniment to the flavorful, healthy cuisine—many dishes are available in vegetarian versions.

A French toast... to our favorite French restaurants. **Les Zygomates Wine Bar & Bistro** serves an inventive menu in a funky neighborhood. Near South Station in an area known as the Leather District (nothing kinky—leather manufacturers used to have their warehouses here), it serves a regularly changing menu. The exemplary bistro fare often includes skate, lentils, and other typical French ingredients, and definitely includes excellent desserts. The efficient waitstaff can suggest just the right wine, which you can try in a 2-ounce "taste" if you don't feel like a full glass. There's live jazz in one of the two dining rooms, and a cool vibe throughout the high-ceilinged, brick-walled space. **Brasserie Jo** in the Colonnade Hotel is an upscale version of the old-world all-day destination. A stone's throw from Copley Place, this is a great stop for a pick-me-up in the

middle of a day of hard shopping. The chic room can get fairly loud at night, especially before a BSO or Pops performance. The classic brasserie fare—*choucroute garnie,* onion tart, salade Niçoise, superb pâtés—goes great with the house beer; champagne is just the thing with fresh seafood. Now all you need is a beret.

Dim sum and then some... Dim sum, the Chinese version of brunch (dumplings, buns, spring rolls, and other appetizer-type delectables) inspires nearly as many debates as pizza or ice cream—whose is the best? When it's our turn to choose, we always head for **Empire Garden;** our regular dim sum buddies prefer **China Pearl,** and we never object. The food comes to your table in small portions on little carts. The waitresses usually know at least enough English to tell you what's on their own carts, and you order by pointing at whatever takes your fancy. The stamped symbol on your check tells the cashier how much to charge; unless it's lobster or some other luxurious ingredient, the price is deliciously low. Come when you're feeling adventurous, in a group if you can. Dim sum is available daily (usually from around 9am–3pm), but the selection is best on weekends, when Chinese-American families flock to Chinatown.

When in Chinatown... Eat Chinese where the Chinese eat—in Chinatown. Frankly, we'd rather have dim sum, but sometimes only a real meal will do. Most Chinatown restaurants are unpretentious places that will cheerfully serve you anything from chicken lo mein to some little-known part of a larger animal. We particularly like **Grand Chau Chow,** which has an enormous menu, typical linoleum floors, a rowdy atmosphere, and large round tables (you may have to share). **East Ocean City** looks slightly smarter than many competitors, with marble floors and big fish tanks full of entrees-to-be, but the food is much the same as elsewhere. The self-proclaimed experts who say you'll get better service if you ask for the Chinese menu overlook the obvious strategy of soliciting suggestions from the waiter or waitress—especially useful if you don't read Chinese.

Attention, sweet teeth... Do you judge restaurants by their dessert menus? Join the club—it meets at **Finale,** which has a "desserterie" in the Theater District and

another in Harvard Square. The menu wisely concentrates on chocolate creations concocted out of the finest raw materials; plenty of other flavors and ingredients also figure into the decadent cakes, pies, tarts, ice creams, and more. The token food items—pizzas (on great dough), salads, and the like—aren't bad, either. The idea of a restaurant that specializes in dessert originated as a Harvard Business School project; we give it an A. **Mike's Pastry,** the best known of the North End's pastry shops (not bakeries—they make bread), is as busy as a video store on Friday night for most of the tourist season. If you can get a seat, there's table service; if not, order your goodies to go. Cannoli (greaseless deep-fried tubes of pastry stuffed while you wait with sweetened fresh ricotta) are the signature sweet, but you can also get brownies, cookies, whole cakes and individual slices, cream puffs, and assorted other pastries, Italian and not. It's all ultra-fresh and reasonably priced. Speaking of ultra-fresh, **Krispy Kreme Doughnuts** has a shop at the Prudential Center. You want one hot from the fryer. Yes, you do.

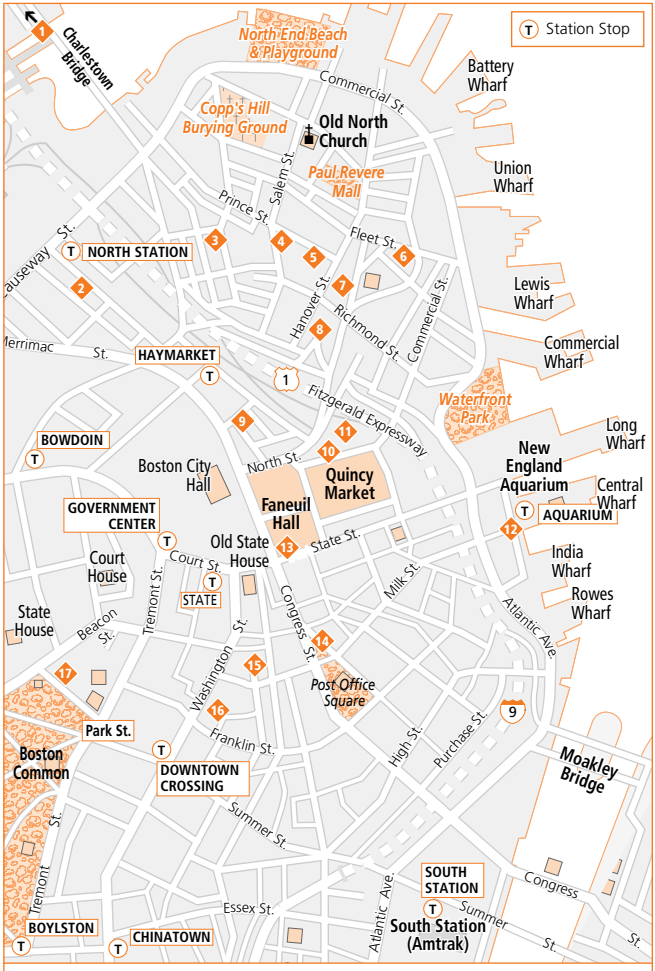
Brunch bonanza... Sunday brunch at a fancy hotel typically is an all-you-can-eat extravaganza of carving stations and hollandaise—and, except on holidays, is also a good way to meet lots of other people from out of town. The locals head to the **S&S Restaurant** in Cambridge, which serves huge portions of omelets, pancakes, waffles, and the like, plus the best bagels in a severely bagel-challenged region. Not only is the excellent food a bargain, but the floor show—everyone from adorable families to hung-over students queues up on Sunday—is great. Our advice: Go on Saturday, when it's not quite as crowded but the menu is the same. **The Blue Room,** also in Cambridge, does an inventive Sunday brunch, and you can sit out on the brick patio in good weather. And **Bob the Chef's Jazz Cafe** in the South End serves a Sunday buffet brunch with a side of live jazz.

Power lunches... Slip off the Freedom Trail and catch lunch with what seems like half the daytime population of the Financial District at the bright, cheerful **Milk Street Cafe**, which sells homemade vegetarian soups, sandwiches, salads, and the like. If you want to sunbathe while you eat, join the throng in Post Office Square. Here you'll find an

outpost of the Milk Street Cafe, a seasonal kiosk that serves meat (the business is kosher, so there's no meat at the cheese-happy original). Not far away, **Chacarero** is a local legend for its huge Chilean sandwiches, served only at lunch and only to go from a window outside Filene's. You have just a few choices: small or large (small is plenty); chicken, beef, or vegetarian; barbecued or grilled meat (barbecued is better); with everything or without some toppings—tomatoes, cheese, hot sauce, avocado, and green beans (go for it). Legions of office and construction workers plop down on the tables and benches on the tiny adjacent plaza; Post Office Square is more pleasant, but you may not want to wait to dig in.

After hours... Boston is not known for late-night frivolity. The best scene is in Chinatown, where many restaurants stay open until 2, 3, or even 4am. Most bars can rustle up a little something until midnight or so, but you don't have to settle for greasy fries and tired nachos. The food is much better at the **Parish Café and Bar**—and why wouldn't it be? Boston's all-star chefs help create the glorious, chunky sandwiches served until 1am daily. The chefs change periodically; at the moment you can enjoy creations by big names such as Michael Schlow and Ken Oringer. Other destinations where the servers don't start checking their watches at 10pm (you can order till at least 11pm on weekdays, midnight on weekends) include **Pho Republique, Sonsie, Davio's, Jacob Wirth Company,** and **Redbones.** And then there's **Krispy Kreme** in the Prudential Center, which cranks out doughnuts until 11:30pm.

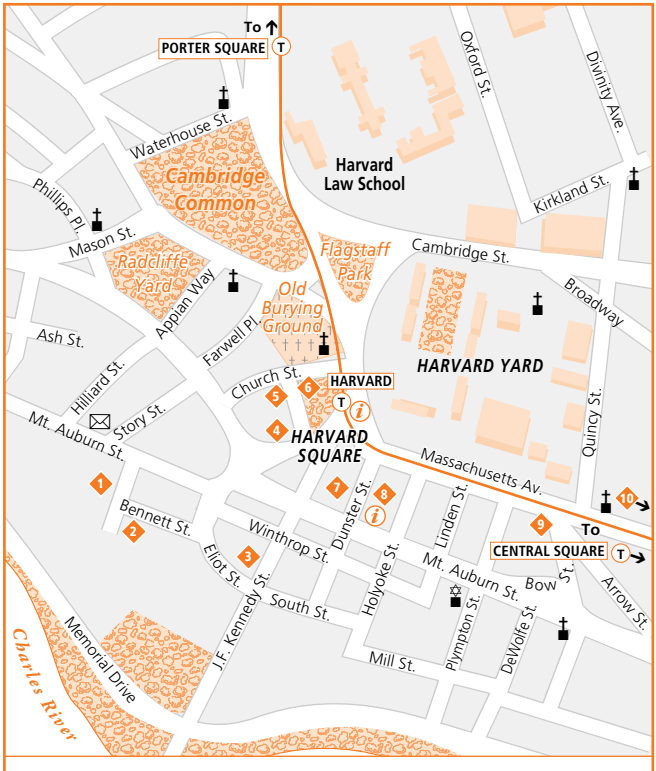
Map 4: Downtown & North End Dining



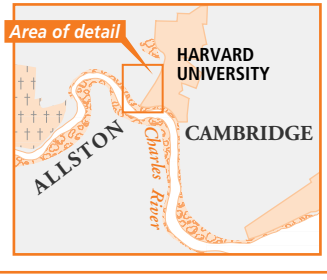
Bertucci's **13**
Boston Beer Works **2**
Chacarero **16**
The Daily Catch **7**
Durgin-Park **11**
Figs **1**
Legal Sea Foods **12**
Mamma Maria **6**
McCormick & Schmick's **10**
Mike's Pastry **5**
Milk Street Cafe **15**
Milk Street Cafe kiosk **14**
No. 9 Park **17**
Piccola Venezia **8**
Pizzeria Regina **3**
Sage **4**
Ye Olde Union Oyster House **9**

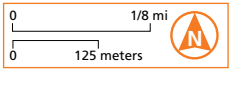
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Map 5: Harvard Square Dining



Bertucci's **4**
Bombay Club **3**
Border Cafe **5**
Finale **8**
Johnny's Luncheonette **10**
Legal Sea Foods **1**
Mr. Bartley's Burger Cottage **9**
Pho Pasteur **7**
Rialto **2**
Veggie Planet **6**









The Index

$$$$$	over $45
$$$$	$35–$45
$$$	$25–$35
$$	$15–$25
$	under $15

Prices reflect per-person cost of a main course, appetizer or dessert, and one alcoholic drink.

The following **abbreviations** are used for credit cards:

AE	American Express
DC	Diners Club
DISC	Discover
MC	MasterCard
V	Visa

Anna's Taqueria (p. 53) CITYWIDE *MEXICAN* A friendly staff serves up huge burritos and Mexican plates—*carnitas* (pork), chicken, or beef with mounds of rice and beans—at super-reasonable prices. There are counters and a few small tables, but this is mainly food to go.... *822 Somerville Ave: Tel 617/661-8500; Cambridge; Porter T stop. 446 Harvard St: Tel 617/277-7111; Brookline; Coolidge Corner T stop. 1412 Beacon St.: Tel 617/739-7300; Brookline; Summit Ave. T stop. Daily 11am–10pm. No credit cards. $*

Aujourd'hui (p. 50) BACK BAY *CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN* One of the best (and most expensive) restaurants in town, Aujourd'hui is *the* place to celebrate an anniversary that ends in a zero.... *Tel 617/351-2037. Four Seasons Hotel, 200 Boylston St. Arlington T stop. Jackets preferred. Mon–Sat 5:30–10pm, Sun 6–10pm; Sun brunch 11:30am–2pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Bangkok City (p. 56) BACK BAY *THAI* Satisfy your curry cravings here. Hate hot? The pad thai is a satisfying tangle of sweet and savory.... *Tel 617/266-8884. www.bkkcity.net. 167 Massachusetts Ave. Hynes/ICA T stop. Mon–Sat 11:30am–3pm; Mon–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri 5–10:30pm, Sat 5–11pm, Sun 3–10pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

The Barking Crab (p. 47) WATERFRONT *SEAFOOD* You're paying a bit extra for the view, but it's cheaper to eat lobster here, outdoors on the harbor with plastic forks and paper plates, than at most other seafood restaurants.... *Tel 617/426-2722. 88 Sleeper St. South Station T stop. Reservations not accepted. Mon–Wed 11am–10pm, Thurs–Fri 11am–11pm, Sat 4–11pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Bertucci's (p. 51) CITYWIDE *PIZZA* Brick-oven pizza, pizza-dough rolls, and good pasta appeal to almost everyone. The growing local chain has branches around the Boston area.... *Merchants Row, Faneuil Hall Marketplace: Tel 617/227-7889; State Street T stop. 43 Stanhope St.: Tel 617/247-6161; Back Bay or Copley T stop. 533 Commonwealth Ave.: Tel 617/236-1030.; Kenmore T stop. 21 Brattle St.: Tel 617/864-4748; Cambridge; Harvard T stop. Additional locations. Reservations not accepted. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.
See Map 4 on p. 62.
See Map 5 on p. 63.

The Blue Room (p. 55) CAMBRIDGE *ECLECTIC* A great scene with great food, the Blue Room is near MIT but attracts diners from all over the Boston area with its lively flavors, open kitchen, commitment to local produce, and excellent wine list.... *Tel 617/494-9034. www.theblueroom.net. 1 Kendall Sq., Cambridge. Kendall/MIT T stop and 10-min. walk. Sun–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm; Sun brunch 11am–2:30pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Bob the Chef's Jazz Cafe (p. 60) SOUTH END *SOUTHERN/CAJUN* These Southern and Cajun specialties could convert the most jaded Yankee palate to fried chicken, collard greens, macaroni and cheese, and jambalaya. Close enough to be a fine choice before a Symphony Hall or Huntington Theatre Company performance. Live music Thursday through Saturday nights and at Sunday brunch.... *Tel 617/536-6204. www.bobthechefs.com. 604 Columbus Ave., Massachusetts Ave. or Symphony T stop. Mon–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–midnight; Sun 10am–10pm (brunch until 2:30pm). AE, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Bombay Club (p. 56) CAMBRIDGE *INDIAN* A culinary travelogue, the menu highlights dishes from across India. The lunch buffet makes an excellent, economical introduction, and the mango margaritas are otherworldly.... *Tel 617/661-8100. www.bombayclub.com. Galleria Mall, 57 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Daily 11:30am–11pm (lunch until 3pm). AE, DC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 63.

Border Cafe (p. 57) CAMBRIDGE *TEX-MEX* Half the population of Cambridge crams into this justifiably popular Tex-Mex restaurant on weekends. Hefty wooden tables and chairs scrape on unpolished wooden floors. Harvard students jam-pack the bar and the basement-level dining room. Be prepared to wait. *Tel 617/864-6100. 32 Church St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Reservations not accepted. Daily 11am–11pm. AE, MC, V. $$*

See Map 5 on p. 63.

Boston Beer Works (p. 52) FENWAY/NORTH STATION *PUB GRUB/AMERICAN* Are they breweries that serve good food? Restaurants that serve great beer? They're both. The original, across from Fenway Park, is huge and phenomenally noisy; the North Station location smaller but equally earsplitting.... *61 Brookline Ave.: www.beerworks.net; Tel 617/536-BEER.; Kenmore or Fenway T stop. 110 Canal St.: Tel 617/896-BEER.; North Station T stop. Reservations not accepted. Sun–Thurs 11am–1am, Fri–Sat 11:30am–2am. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.
See Map 4 on p. 62.

Brasserie Jo (p. 58) BACK BAY *FRENCH* You wouldn't expect this elegant, Euro-style hotel to have a run-of-the-mill dining room, and it doesn't. A taste of France in the Back Bay, Brasserie Jo keeps long hours, serving everything from business breakfasts to shopping breaks to pre- or post-symphony meals.... *Tel 617/425-3240. www.brasseriejoboston.com. Colonnade Hotel, 120 Huntington Ave. Prudential T stop. Mon–Fri 6:30am–11pm; Sat 7am–11pm; Sun 7am–10pm; late-night menu daily until 1am. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Buddha's Delight (p. 55) CHINATOWN *VEGETARIAN VIETNAMESE* Oh, that Buddha—he's a wise one. Head here for vegetarian Vietnamese creations so ingenious that you'll hardly miss the meat.... *Tel 617/451-2395. 5 Beach St. Chinatown T stop. Sun–Thurs 11am–9:30pm, Fri–Sat 11am–10:30pm. MC, V. $*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Cambridge Brewing Company (p. 52) CAMBRIDGE *AMERICAN* The beer is brewed on the premises, and the food's good, too.... *Tel 617/494-1994. www.cambrew.com. 1 Kendall Sq., Cambridge. Kendall/MIT T stop and 10-min. walk. Weekdays 11:30am–11pm, Sat noon–11pm, Sun 3–10pm. AE, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Casa Romero (p. 50) BACK BAY *MEXICAN* In the same building as L'Espalier—talk about good vibes. Casa Romero serves Mexican cuisine in two dining rooms with low ceilings, hardwood floors, ceramic tables, and Aztec murals. Or you can dine in the lovely courtyard.... *Tel 617/536-4341. www.casaromero.com. 30 Gloucester St., side entrance. Hynes/ICA T stop. Sun–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–11pm. DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Chacarero (p. 61) DOWNTOWN CROSSING *SANDWICHES* Your reward for a lengthy wait (up to 20 min. at busy times) is a succulent Chilean sandwich. Join the line on the right to order and pay, then join the line on the left—don't forget your receipt—for a front-row view of the prep line.... *Tel 617/542-0392. 426 Washington St. Downtown Crossing T stop. Weekdays 11am–7pm. No credit cards. $*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

China Pearl (p. 59) CHINATOWN *CHINESE/DIM SUM* Both a top dim sum destination and a good choice for dinner.... *Tel 617/426-4338. 9 Tyler St., 2nd floor. Chinatown T stop. Daily 8:30am–11pm. AE, MC, V. $*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

The Clam Box (p. 47) IPSWICH *SEAFOOD* Worth a trip to the North Shore, these fried clams are redolent of the sea. Eat in the adorable red-and-white-striped building or take a picnic to nearby Crane Beach.... *Tel 978/356-9707. 206 High St., Ipswich. No T stop. Daily Mar–Nov; call for hours. No credit cards. $$*

Clio (p. 53) BACK BAY *ECLECTIC* Sleek and stylish dining room with a brain-teasing menu of French-inspired cuisine. Too, too chic.... *Tel 617/536-7200. www.cliorestaurant.com. Eliot Hotel, 370A Commonwealth Ave. Hynes/ICA T stop. Sun and Tues–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–10:30pm. Closed Mon. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Club Cafe (p. 50) BACK BAY/SOUTH END The food served in the front is pricey but tasty at this trendy spot for gays and lesbians. .... *Tel 617/536-0966. 209 Columbus Ave. Back Bay T stop.*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

The Daily Catch (p. 56) NORTH END *SEAFOOD/SOUTHERN ITALIAN* A North End stalwart with no elbow room, no menu (check the chalkboard), and no atmosphere—but superb seafood. Calamari is the specialty; everything's yummy.... *Tel 617/523-8567. 323 Hanover St. Haymarket T stop. Reservations not accepted. Sun–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–11pm. No credit cards. $$$*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

Davio's (p. 51) BACK BAY/CAMBRIDGE *CREATIVE NORTHERN ITALIAN* Pastas that would shame your favorite Italian restaurant, steakhouse-quality grilled meats, sublime house-made breads and desserts, just-right service, and a great wine list make Davio's a top choice for business or pleasure.... *75 Arlington St.: Tel 617/357-4810; www.davios.com; Arlington T stop; Mon–Fri 11:30am–3pm; daily 5–11pm. 5 Cambridge Pkwy.: Tel 617/661-4810; Royal Sonesta Hotel; Lechmere T stop; Mon–Fri 11:30am–3pm; daily 5–11pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Doyle's (p. 49) JAMAICA PLAIN *PUB GRUB* A neighborhood place for a huge (in spirit) neighborhood, this classic tavern inspires such devotion that a friend of ours named her cat Doyle. Politicians swap war stories, and the wooden booths are always packed.... *Tel 617/524-2345. 3484 Washington St., Jamaica Plain. Green St. T stop. Daily 9am–1am (food served until 11pm). No credit cards. $*

Durgin-Park (p. 49) DOWNTOWN *NEW ENGLAND* "There's no place like this place anywhere near this place, so this must be the place," says the sign at the entrance—and it's right. Hearty plates of seafood, prime rib, and Boston baked beans served with tons of attitude.... *Tel 617/227-2038. www.durgin-park.com. 340 Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Government Center T stop. Reservations not accepted. Daily 11:30am–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 2:30–10pm; Sun 2:30–9pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

East Coast Grill & Raw Bar (p. 52) CAMBRIDGE *SEAFOOD/BARBECUE* If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the restaurant—or stick to the cool oysters and icy beer at the raw bar.... *Tel 617/491-6568. www.eastcoastgrill.net. 1271 Cambridge St., Inman Sq., Cambridge. Central T stop and 10-min. walk. Sun–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–10:30pm; Sun brunch 11am–2:30pm. AE, MC, V. $$$*

East Ocean City (p. 59) CHINATOWN *CHINESE* It looks fancy, but the food's just par for Chinatown. Best bets are crab or other seafood entrees.... *Tel 617/542-2504. 25–29 Beach St. Chinatown T stop. Reservations only for 6 or more. Sun–Thurs 11am–3am; Fri–Sat 11am–4am. AE, MC, V. DISC, DC not accepted. $$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

The Elephant Walk (p. 55) KENMORE SQUARE/CAMBRIDGE *CAMBODIAN/FRENCH* A mother-and-daughter team runs this excellent little chain serving French and "aristocratic Cambodian" cuisine. The Boston location is a gracious, airy dining room decorated with elephant motifs and objets d'art.... *900 Beacon St: Tel 617/247-1500; St. Mary's T stop (Green Line C); weekdays 11:30am–2:30pm; Sun–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri–Sat 5–11pm. 2067 Massachusetts Ave.: Tel 617/492-6900; Cambridge; Porter T stop; Sun–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri–Sat 5–11pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Emma's Pizzeria (p. 57) CAMBRIDGE *PIZZA* The best thin-crust pizza in the 'hood, using fresh, organic ingredients. Famous for the caramelized onion and sausage pie and homemade salad dressings on crackling-fresh salads. Order ahead.... *Tel 617/864-8534. 40 Hampshire St., Cambridge. Kendall/MIT T stop and 10-min. walk. Tues–Sat 11:30am–8pm, Sun 3–8pm. Closed Mon. AE, MC, V. $*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Empire Garden Restaurant (p. 59) CHINATOWN *CHINESE/DIM SUM* A cavernous space that used to be a theater balcony, this is one of our top picks for dim sum.... *Tel 617/482-8898. 690–698 Washington St., 2nd floor. Chinatown T stop. Daily 8:30am–11pm. AE, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Fajitas & 'Ritas (p. 58) DOWNTOWN CROSSING *TEX-MEX* Cheerful, friendly, and informal, this is a popular business-lunch spot and a great stop before or after a movie at the nearby Loews Boston Common. Kids love the do-it-yourself ordering system.... *Tel 617/426-1222. www.fajitasandritas.com. 25 West St. Downtown Crossing T stop. Reservations not accepted. Mon–Tues 11:30am–9pm; Wed–Thurs 11:30am–10pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–11pm; Sun 2–8pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Figs (p. 57) BEACON HILL/CHARLESTOWN PIZZA A thin-crust gourmet pizza pioneer, with creative toppings (like prosciutto and eggs on a recent brunch special). Call ahead to put your name on the waiting list, or do as the locals do and order take-out.... *42 Charles St.: Tel 617/742-3447; Charles/MGH T stop; weekdays 11:30am–2:30pm and 5–10pm; Sat 11:30am–11pm; Sun 11:30am–9pm. 67 Main St.: Tel 617/242-2229; Charlestown or Community College T stop; ferry from Long Wharf (Aquarium T) to Charlestown Navy Yard; Sun–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri–Sat 5–11pm. Reservations not accepted. AE, DC, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.
See Map 4 on p. 62.

Finale (p. 59) THEATER DISTRICT/CAMBRIDGE *DESSERT* Dessert as art: creative, original, irresistible. Try not to stand in the path of the stampeding chocoholics.... *1 Columbus Ave.: Tel 617/423-3184; www.finaledesserts.com; Arlington T stop; weekdays 11:30am–3pm; Mon–Sat 6–11pm, Sun 4–10pm. 30 Dunster St.: Tel 617/441-9797; Harvard T stop; Mon 11am–11pm, Tues–Wed 11am–11:30pm, Thurs–Fri 11am–12:30am, Sat noon–12:30am, Sun 2–11pm. Reservations only for 5 or more, accepted Sun–Thurs only. DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.
See Map 5 on p. 63.

Fugakyu (p. 48) BROOKLINE *SUSHI/JAPANESE* Ultra-fresh sushi in an ultra-funky atmosphere. If you're in a large group, book a tatami room.... *Tel 617/734-1268. 1280 Beacon St., Brookline. Coolidge Corner T (Green Line C). Reservations accepted only for 5 or more. Daily 11:30am–3pm and 5pm–1:30am. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

Ginza Japanese Restaurant (p. 48) CHINATOWN/BROOKLINE *SUSHI/JAPANESE* Try something wacky like "spider" maki (actually cooked soft-shell crab) or something luxurious like a huge

sushi boat. After last call, club kids flock to the Chinatown location, which is open till 4am (2am Sun–Mon nights).... *14 Hudson St.: Tel 617/338-2261; Chinatown T stop; Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm; Sat–Sun 11:30am–4pm; Sun–Mon 5pm–2am; Tues–Sat 5pm–4am.. 1002 Beacon St.: Tel 617/566-9688; Brookline; Coolidge Corner T stop (Green Line C); Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm; Mon–Thurs 5–10pm, Fri–Sat 5–10:30pm, Sun 5–9pm. AE, DC, MC, V. $$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Grand Chau Chow **(p. 46)** CHINATOWN *CHINESE* Zealous servers speed food to the table moments after you order—main courses sometimes precede appetizers. The vast menu emphasizes seafood; you can eat for a few bucks or spend a fortune.... *Tel 617/292-5166. 45 Beach St. Chinatown T stop. Reservations only for 10 or more. Sun–Thurs 10am–3am; Fri–Sat 10am–4am. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $–$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Green Street Grill **(p. 52)** CAMBRIDGE *CARIBBEAN/SEAFOOD* That wish you've been wishing—that someone would point you to a neighborhood place with inventive food (say, Caribbean with lots of other influences) that you'd never run across on your own? Granted.... *Tel 617/876-1655. www.greenstreetgrill.com. 280 Green St., Cambridge. Central T stop. Reservations only for 6 or more. Sun–Wed 5:30–10pm, Thurs–Sat 5:30–10:30pm; Sun brunch 11am–2:30pm. AE, DC, MC, V. $$$*

Grill 23 & Bar **(p. 54)** BACK BAY *STEAKHOUSE* The top steakhouse in a ferociously competitive market attracts masters of the universe and wannabes of both genders with superb food, an outstanding wine list, and a roaring bar scene.... *Tel 617/542-2255. www.grill23.com. 161 Berkeley St. Arlington T stop. Mon–Thurs 5:30–10:30pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm; Sun 5:30–10pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

The Helmand **(p. 55)** CAMBRIDGE *AFGHAN* Yes, dinner at an Afghan restaurant feels a little like blundering onto the set of a "ripped from the headlines" TV movie—one that would win its time slot if it were as good as this veggie-friendly cuisine.... *Tel 617/492-4646. 143 First St., Cambridge. Lechmere T stop. Sun–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 5–11pm. AE, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Hilltop Steak House **(p. 54)** SAUGUS *STEAKHOUSE* The region's best-known steakhouse, 20 minutes north of town by car. It's kitschy and enormous, and it serves marvelous steak.... *Tel 781/233-7700. www.hilltopsteakhouse.com. 855 Broadway St. (Rte. 1 South), Saugus. No T stop. Reservations not accepted. Mon–Thurs 11am–10pm, Fri–Sat 11am–11pm, Sun 11:30am–10pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$*

Icarus (p. 50) SOUTH END *ECLECTIC* So romantic that it doesn't have windows—there's no view to distract you from your sweetie.... *Tel 617/426-1790. www.icarusrestaurant.com. 3 Appleton St. Arlington or Back Bay T stop. Mon–Thurs 6–10pm; Fri 6–10:30pm; Sat 5:30–10:30pm; Sun 5:30–10pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

India Pavilion (p. 56) CAMBRIDGE *INDIAN* The original Central Square Indian restaurant (the Singh family opened it in 1979) is still the best; it serves terrific renditions of all the basics and a reasonably priced lunch buffet.... *Tel 617/547-9280. 546 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge. Central T stop. Weekdays noon–3pm and 5–11pm, weekends noon–11pm. AE, DISC, MC, V. $–$$*

Jacob Wirth Company (p. 49) THEATER DISTRICT *GERMAN/AMERICAN* Who can argue with a tradition, especially one that dates to 1868? "Jake's" serves good German and American bar grub, from burgers to knockwurst to prime rib.... *Tel 617/338-8586. www.jacobwirth.com. 31–37 Stuart St. Boylston St. or New England Medical Center T stop. Sun–Mon 11:30am–8pm; Tues–Thurs 11:30am–11pm; Fri–Sat 11:30am–midnight. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Jasper White's Summer Shack (p. 47) CAMBRIDGE/BACK BAY *SEAFOOD* Jasper White, one of America's top chefs, is the mastermind behind this noisy Cambridge eatery. The lobster tank in the middle of the floor is a magnet for kids; the grilled seafood is nearly as entrancing for adults.... *149 Alewife Brook Pkwy., Cambridge: Tel 617/520-9500; www.summershackrestaurant.com; Alewife T stop; Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm; Sun–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 5pm–11pm. 50 Dalton St.: Tel 617/867-9955; Hynes/ICA or Prudential T stop; Sun–Wed 11am–11pm, Thurs–Sat 11am–1am. Reservations not accepted. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Jimmy's Harborside Restaurant (p. 47) SOUTH BOSTON WATERFRONT *SEAFOOD* Great water views make Jimmy's better than the downtown fish restaurants. Though it's tough to get to, the warm welcome, courtly service, and well-prepared seafood make this place a Boston classic.... *Tel 617/423-1000. www.jimmysharborside.com. 242 Northern Ave. South Station T stop and 1-mile walk or $5 cab ride. Mon–Thurs noon–9:30pm; Fri–Sat noon–10pm (lunch until 4pm); Sun 4–9pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Johnny's Luncheonette (p. 53) CAMBRIDGE *AMERICAN* If the breakfast served all day doesn't get you, the fantastic deli sandwiches and dinner platters will. Check out the retro tunes on

the jukebox.... *Tel 617/495-0055. 1105 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Reservations not accepted. Daily 7am–10pm. MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 5 on p. 63.

Krispy Kreme Doughnuts **(p. 60)** BACK BAY *DOUGHNUTS* Now that the North Carolina–based chain is moving into the Northeast, you'd think relatively easy access would diminish the hypnotic appeal of a fresh, hot Original Glazed. You'd be very, very wrong.... *Tel 617/262-5531. www.krispykreme.com. Shops at Prudential Center, 800 Boylston St. Prudential or Copley T stop. Daily 5am–11:30pm. No credit cards. $*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Legal Sea Foods **(p. 46)** CITYWIDE *SEAFOOD* The people want fresh seafood, expertly prepared, and that's what they get here. This chain, probably the best in New England, just keeps on growing. Only the Prudential branch accepts reservations (and only at lunch); only the Harvard Square location (behind the Charles Hotel) serves Sunday brunch; only the State Street branch has a view of the Aquarium, which is full of...uh-oh.... *800 Boylston St.: Tel 617/266-6800; www.legalseafoods.com; Prudential Center; Prudential or Copley T stop. 20 University Rd.: Tel 617/491-9400; Cambridge; Harvard T stop. 255 State St.: Tel 617/742-5300; Aquarium T stop. 100 Huntington Ave.: Tel 617/266-7775; Copley Place; Copley T stop. 26 Park Sq.: Tel 617/864-3400 (617/426-4444); Arlington T stop. 5 Cambridge Center: Tel 617/266-7775; Cambridge; Kendall/MIT T stop. Additional locations. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.
See Map 4 on p. 62.
See Map 5 on p. 63.

L'Espalier **(p. 49)** BACK BAY *NEW ENGLAND* High-end, French-influenced, New England cuisine on a frequently changing prix-fixe menu. The husband-and-wife team of Frank (the chef) and Catherine McClelland have made L'Espalier a favorite that rivals Aujourd'hui for top special-occasion honors.... *Tel 617/262-3023. www.lespalier.com. 30 Gloucester St. Hynes/ICA T stop. Mon–Sat 5:30–10pm. Closed Sun. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Les Zygomates Wine Bar & Bistro **(p. 58)** LEATHER DISTRICT *FRENCH* "Les Zyg" offers wine tastings (Tues night) and live jazz (in a separate dining room) Tuesday through Saturday. Zygomates are the muscles that make you smile—and you will.... *Tel 617/542-5108. www.winebar.com. 129 South St. South Station T stop. Mon–Fri 11:30am–1am (lunch until 2pm, dinner until 10:30pm); Sat 6pm–1am (dinner until 11:30pm). Closed Sun. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Mamma Maria (p. 57) NORTH END *NORTHERN ITALIAN* More expensive than the usual North End restaurant—and totally worth it. Northern Italian cuisine is unusual in this neighborhood, too, but you'll never miss spaghetti and meatballs when you're tucking into superb seafood specials and magnificent osso buco at this romantic retreat.... *Tel 617/523-0077. www.mammamaria.com. 3 North Sq. Haymarket T stop. Sun–Thurs 5–9:30pm; Fri–Sat 5–10:30pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

McCormick & Schmick's Seafood Restaurant (p. 48) DOWNTOWN/BACK BAY *SEAFOOD* The interloper from the Pacific Northwest prints its encyclopedic menu of super-fresh fish and shellfish twice a day. Our hearts belong to Legal, but our wallets can't resist the $1.95 menu items during "social hour" after work on weekdays at the Park Plaza branch.... *Faneuil Hall Marketplace: Tel 617/720-5522; www.mccormickandschmick.com; North Market Building; Government Center or Haymarket T stop. 34 Columbus Ave: Tel 617/482-3999; Boston Park Plaza Hotel; Arlington T stop. Daily 11am–11:30pm (lunch until 4pm). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.
See Map 4 on p. 62.

Midwest Grill (p. 54) SOMERVILLE *BRAZILIAN BARBECUE* How do those Brazilian beach bunnies fit into their R-rated bikinis? Not by eating like this. Meat, meat, and more meat, with excellent sides served salad bar style.... *Tel 617/354-7536. www.midwestgrill.com. 1124 Cambridge St., Inman Sq., Cambridge. Central T stop and 10-min. walk. Daily 11:30am–11:30pm. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

Mike's Pastry (p. 59) NORTH END *DESSERT* The only blue-and-white boxes more exciting than Mike's Pastry's are from Tiffany's.... *Tel 617/742-3050. www.mikespastry.com. 300 Hanover St. Haymarket T stop. Mon and Wed–Thurs 8am–9pm, Tues 9am–8pm, Fri 8am–10:30pm, Sat 8am–11pm, Sun 8am–930pm. No credit cards. $*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

Milk Street Cafe (p. 55) FINANCIAL DISTRICT *VEGETARIAN* A favorite with downtown workers, this cafeteria-style spot serves excellent salads, sandwiches, soups, and other lunch fare such as quiches and veggie melts. It's kosher and vegetarian; there's no meat here, but there is at the seasonal kiosk in the park in Post Office Square.... *Tel 617/542-3663. www.milkstreetcafe.com. 50 Milk St. State Street T stop. Weekdays 7am–3pm. Closed weekends. No dinner. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

Mr. Bartley's Burger Cottage (p. 53) CAMBRIDGE *AMERICAN* A family-run dash of authenticity in an increasingly homogenized

neighborhood, Bartley's serves something for everyone, including excellent burgers and peerless onion rings.... *Tel 617/354-6559. www.mrbartleys.com. 1246 Mass. Ave. Harvard T stop. Reservations not accepted. Mon–Sat 11am–9pm. Closed Sun. No credit cards. $*

See Map 5 on p. 63.

No. 9 Park **(p. 49)** BEACON HILL *FRENCH COUNTRY/ITALIAN* Chef Barbara Lynch wins raves for No. 9 Park, where America meets France with a dollop of Italy.... *Tel 617/742-9991. www.no9park.com. 9 Park St. Park St. T stop. Mon–Fri 11:30am–2:30pm; Mon–Sat 5:30–10pm (cafe until 11pm). Closed Sun. AE, DC, MC, V. $$$$–$$$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

Oak Room **(p. 53)** BACK BAY *STEAKHOUSE* This fancy-schmancy hotel dining room features luxe touches, like tapestry chairs and crystal chandeliers, but the menu sticks to simple, straightforward steaks and seafood.... *Tel 617/267-5300. The Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel, 138 St. James Ave. Copley or Back Bay T stop. Mon–Thurs 5:30–10pm, Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Oleana **(p. 54)** CAMBRIDGE *MEDITERRANEAN* The very model of a modern neighborhood restaurant, Oleana features lively flavors from warm climates, excellent service, great desserts, and a lovely patio.... *Tel 617/661-0505. www.oleanarestaurant.com. 134 Hampshire St., Inman Sq., Cambridge. Central T stop and 10-min. walk. Sun–Thurs 5:30–10pm; Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm. AE, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

Parish Café and Bar **(p. 61)** BACK BAY *SANDWICHES* To sample the talents of the city's top chefs on the cheap, order a sandwich here. Each bears the name of its creator, a star like Michael Schlow (rare sirloin on Tuscan wheat with caramelized onions) or Ken Oringer (Vietnamese grilled chicken breast with mint-coriander mayo).... *Tel 617/247-4777. www.parishcafe.com. 361 Boylston St. Arlington T stop. Reservations not accepted. Mon–Sat 11:30am–2am, Sun noon–2am. AE, DC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Pho Pasteur **(p. 56)** CITYWIDE *VIETNAMESE* The Vietnamese noodle house that took Boston by storm. Even a fur-lined trench coat won't warm you up like this stuff.... *119 Newbury St.: Tel 617/262-8200; Copley T stop. 682 Washington St.: Tel 617/482-7467; Chinatown T stop. 36 Dunster St.: Tel 617/864-4100; Cambridge; Harvard T stop. Additional locations. Daily 11am–10pm. AE, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.
See Map 5 on p. 63.

Pho Republique (p. 56) SOUTH END *VIETNAMESE* The anchor of the South End's latest version of restaurant row is this Vietnamese hotspot with a funky bar.... *Tel 617/262-0005. www.phorepublique.net. 1415 Washington St. Back Bay T stop and 15-min. walk, or Silver Line bus from Temple Place. (Downtown Crossing T stop). Reservations only for 6 or more. Daily 5:30pm–12:30am. MC, V. $$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Piccola Venezia (p. 56) NORTH END *SOUTHERN ITALIAN* Probably loses business because it's one of the first places sightseers pass after the Freedom Trail hits the North End. They figure that if it's that easy to find, it can't be very good. Wrong!.... *Tel 617/523-3888. 263 Hanover St. Haymarket T stop. Daily 11am–10pm (lunch Mon–Fri until 4pm). AE, DISC, MC, V. $$*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

Pizzeria Regina (p. 57) NORTH END *PIZZA* Seek out the original location of this restaurant in the North End, where the brick oven cranks out pies with delicious, smoke-kissed crusts.... *Tel 617/227-0765. 11½ Thacher St. Haymarket T stop. Reservations not accepted. Mon–Thurs 11am–11:30pm; Fri–Sat 11am–midnight; Sun noon–11pm. No credit cards. $*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

Radius (p. 51) FINANCIAL DISTRICT *CONTEMPORARY FRENCH* Worth a splurge, this neo-French restaurant is a Boston foodie darling.... *Tel 617/426-1234. www.radiusrestaurant.com. 8 High St. South Station T stop. Weekdays 11:30am–2:30pm; Mon–Thurs 5:30–10pm, Fri–Sat 5:30–11pm. Closed Sun. AE, DC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Redbones (p. 52) SOMERVILLE *BARBECUE* This onetime neighborhood bar kept its friendly vibe when it became a finger-lickin' barbecue joint. Wash it all down with a "half-and-half" (half lemonade, half iced tea) or something from the huge beer menu.... *Tel 617/628-2200. www.redbones.com. 55 Chester St., Davis Sq., Somerville. Davis T stop. Reservations not accepted Fri–Sat. Mon–Sat 11:30am–10:30pm; Sun noon–10:30pm; daily lunch until 4pm, late-night menu until 12:30am. No credit cards. $–$$*

Rialto (p. 53) CAMBRIDGE *MEDITERRANEAN* The best of the hotel dining rooms, the best of the celebrity-chef vehicles, the best all around.... *Tel 617/661-5050. www.rialto-restaurant.com. Charles Hotel, 1 Bennett St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Mon–Fri 5:30–10pm, Sat 5:30–11pm, Sun 5:30–9pm. Bar Sun–Thurs 5pm–midnight, Fri–Sat 5pm–1am. AE, DC, MC, V. $$$$$*

See Map 5 on p. 63.

Sage (p. 57) NORTH END *CREATIVE ITALIAN/FRENCH* A small dining room, a tiny kitchen, and an ambitious menu come together at this well-known North End restaurant. The inventive cuisine

incorporates Italian, new American, and French accents.... *Tel 617/248-8814. www.sageboston.com. 69 Prince St. Haymarket T stop. Mon–Sat 5:30–10:30pm. Closed Sun. AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$–$$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 62.

S&S Restaurant **(p. 60)** CAMBRIDGE *DELI* The center of Cambridge's weekend-brunch universe is a worthy destination on weekdays, too.... *Tel 617/354-0777. www.sandsrestaurant.com. 1334 Cambridge St., Inman Sq., Cambridge. Central T stop and 10-min. walk. Reservations not accepted. Mon–Wed 7am–11pm; Thurs–Fri 7am–midnight; Sat 8am–midnight; Sun 8am–10pm; brunch Sat–Sun until 4pm. AE, MC, V. $–$$*

Sonsie **(p. 51)** BACK BAY *ECLECTIC* Great people-watching on the Mass. Ave. (funkier) end of Newbury Street. The international menu encompasses pizza, noodles, steaks, and sweets; Sunday brunch features everything from scrambled eggs to steamed mussels.... *Tel 617/351-2500. www.sonsieboston.com. 327 Newbury St. Hynes/ICA T stop. Daily 7am–1am. AE, DISC, MC, V. $$–$$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Tu y Yo Mexican Fonda **(p. 58)** SOMERVILLE *MEXICAN* Authentic Mexican in a friendly, off-the-beaten-track storefront near the Tufts campus. Try the cinnamon-infused coffee.... *Tel 617/623-5411. www.tuyyomexicanfonda.com. 858 Broadway, Somerville. Davis T stop and 10-min. walk. Mon–Thurs 5–10pm; Fri–Sat 4–11pm; Sun 4–9pm. MC, V. $$*

The Upper Crust **(p. 57)** BEACON HILL/BROOKLINE *PIZZA* Thin-crust pizza with the full range of gourmet toppings, including clams and shrimp. Calzones and salads round out the menu. *20 Charles St.: Tel 617/723-9600; www.theuppercrustpizzeria.com; Charles/MGH T stop; Mon–Wed 11:30am–10pm, Thurs–Sun 11:30am–10:30pm. 286 Harvard St.: Tel 617/734-4900; Brookline; Coolidge Corner T stop (Green Line C); daily 11:30am–10:30pm. AE, MC, V. $–$$*

See Map 3 on p. 42.

Veggie Planet **(p. 55)** CAMBRIDGE *VEGETARIAN* Organic dough, local produce, and good vibes. The veggie and vegan pizza toppings are also available served over rice.... *Tel 617/661-1513. www.veggieplanet.net. 47 Palmer St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Daily 11:30am–10:30pm (Sun brunch until 3pm). No credit cards. $*

See Map 5 on p. 63.

Woodman's of Essex **(p. 47)** ESSEX *SEAFOOD* Come to the birthplace of the fried clam for the experience of eating boiled lobster and fried seafood at picnic tables in the middle of a salt marsh—or in the atmospheric main building, where the bugs can't get to

you.... *Tel 978/768-6057. www.woodmans.com. 121 Main St., Essex. No T stop. Summer daily 11am–10pm; winter Sun–Thurs 11am–8pm, Fri–Sat 11am–9pm. No credit cards. $$*

Ye Olde Union Oyster House **(p. 46)** DOWNTOWN *SEAFOOD* The oldest continuously serving restaurant in the nation, the Oyster House is famed for its extensive raw bar and its olde New England, publike atmosphere.... *Tel 617/227-2750. www.unionoysterhouse.com. 41 Union St. Haymarket T stop. Sun–Thurs 11am–9:30pm (lunch menu until 5pm); Fri–Sat 11am–10pm (lunch until 6pm). Union Bar daily 11am–midnight (lunch until 3pm, late supper until 11pm). AE, DC, DISC, MC, V. $$$$*

See Map 4 on p. 62.


DIVER

SIONS

3

Basic Stuff

Got your walking shoes, subway tokens, cab fare? Good, because it's next to impossible to take your car sightseeing in Boston. You're bound to get lost, and when you finally get where you're going, you won't be able to park. In a city of neighborhoods built long before the automobile, Bostonians usually walk, take the T or bus, or spring for cabs. (And behind the wheel, they tend to turn into demolition-derby drivers. Fair warning.)

Boston's a small city of about 43 square miles—and that figure represents a lot of annexed "streetcar suburbs," where tourists rarely venture. Landfill has augmented the tiny original Shawmut Peninsula, which John Winthrop and his fellow settlers colonized in 1630, but the whole deal still takes up very little space. Beacon Hill, the Back Bay, downtown (including the Theater District and Chinatown), the North End, and the Fenway hold most of the city's attractions. Restaurants and cafes may lure you to the South End. Cambridge is a separate city, as old as Boston and with its own lefty multicultural gestalt, but geographically it's a quick hop on the T across the Charles River—and it's a vital part of the Boston experience.

These days, the "Cheers" bar and the Hard Rock Cafe have more drawing power than the American Revolution, but you really shouldn't visit Boston without walking at least part of the Freedom Trail, the nifty historical route marked by a red (paint or brick) line on the sidewalk. The 2.5-mile trail—at some points not so clearly marked—officially includes 16 sites significant in early American history, from Boston Common to the **Bunker Hill Monument** and USS *Constitution* in Charlestown. Pick up a map at the Boston Common Visitor Information Center on the Tremont Street side of Boston Common, where the trail begins. (You can also grab flyers here for nearly every other tourist destination in the area.) A lot of people cop out where the trail leaves the North End and crosses the Charlestown Bridge. Alternatives to the walk include the water shuttle from Long Wharf to the **Charlestown Navy Yard,** and the bus from Haymarket to Charlestown's City Square. Some skip the Charlestown side altogether, which is worth considering unless you're a fan of naval or military history, or one of those obsessive types who has to finish everything they start.

Getting Your Bearings

In Boston's earliest years, almost everyone lived in the North End. (On busy modern weekends, you might think that's still

true.) With the Big Dig winding down, the neighborhood feels renewed—the elevated expressway that cut it off from downtown is gone, and Boston's connection to the water is more apparent than it's been in two generations. After Beacon Hill siphoned off the North End's wealthy white population and its free black working-class residents in the early 1800s, the North End became an immigrants' welcome center, first for Irish and Eastern European Jews, and later for Italians. It retains a strong Italian-American influence. Across the remains of the Big Dig sprawls bland, modern Government Center, which segues into the Financial District, where high-rises tower over 17th- and 18th-century streets with noteworthy Colonial-era sites hidden like Easter eggs among them. In downtown's farther reaches, the Theater District surrounds the intersection of Tremont and Stuart streets and Chinatown snuggles beside the Mass. Pike, joining the Theater District at a tiny but seedy area known as the Combat Zone. Its adult-entertainment businesses are

The Freedom Trail

The number of official stops on the Freedom Trail and even its length depend on who's counting and how good you are at not getting lost. This isn't a checklist; consider skipping around or going in reverse order if the idea of walking the streets in lockstep doesn't appeal. For a good overview, check out the website of the Freedom Trail Foundation (Tel ***617/357-8300;*** *www.thefreedomtrail.org). A generous list of notable sites in early American history along the 2.5- (or maybe 3-) mile trail:*

1. *Boston Common*
2. *Massachusetts State House*
3. *Park Street Church*
4. *Old Granary Burying Ground*
5. *King's Chapel and Burying Ground*
6. *First Public School marker and Benjamin Franklin statue*
7. *Old Corner Bookstore*
8. *Old South Meeting House and Benjamin Franklin's Birthplace*
9. *Boston Massacre Site*
10. *Old State House*
11. *Faneuil Hall*
12. *Paul Revere House*
13. *Old North Church*
14. *Copp's Hill Burying Ground*
15. *USS* Constitution
16. *Bunker Hill Monument*

disappearing, but the atmosphere on Washington Street and around the Tufts–New England Medical Center at night is still far from welcoming.

Boston Common separates downtown from Beacon Hill. "The Hill," with its cozy streets and grand but not gaudy homes, has the redbrick-and-cobblestone look closely associated with Boston. Charles Street is its picture-postcard main drag. Cambridge Street, at the foot of Beacon Hill's "north slope," is undergoing a face-lift to change it from grim to glam. Across Charles Street from the Common is the Public Garden, where the Back Bay begins. Many Brahmins left their charming but cramped Beacon Hill quarters in the late 19th century for larger homes in the Back Bay, built on landfill with large, straight streets running west from the Public Garden and parallel to the Charles. Today, most of the elegant Back Bay row houses have been subdivided into apartments (many of them stuffed with students) and condos. Newbury Street is a magnet for shoppers, and a great street scene, especially in the relatively lower-rent area near Massachusetts Avenue (aka Mass. Ave.). Copley Square, bookended by the magnificent architecture of **Trinity Church** and the **Boston Public Library,** is the jewel of the Back Bay. Not far away, the Southwest Corridor divides the Back Bay from the South End, a Victorian megalopolis with brownstone-lined streets. The gay community played a big role in gentrifying the South End; pockets are still in serious disrepair, but many parts are as manicured and charming as the best of Beacon Hill and the Back Bay.

Cultural diversions abound in the Fenway, which has **Frederick Law Olmsted,** co-designer of New York's Central Park, to thank for its green space. Here you'll find Symphony Hall, the New England Conservatory of Music, the **Museum of Fine Arts,** and the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum;** for fans of pop culture, baseball's Fenway Park adjoins nightclub-laden Lansdowne Street. The flashing Citgo sign above Kenmore Square signals that you're moving into Boston University territory. The Green Line trolley passes through here en route to Brookline, the first of the streetcar suburbs. If you're feeling adventurous, take bus 39 (from Copley Sq.) or the Orange Line to Jamaica Plain. Better known as "J.P.," this is a well-integrated, mixed-income community with funky restaurants and cozy pubs on and around Centre Street, plus an urban oasis, Jamaica Pond. This might be where the Boston catchphrase "You can't get there from here" originated; nonresidents (even other Bostonians) have trouble giving and following directions in J.P.

Charlestown lies across the Inner Harbor from the North End; Cambridge stretches along the north bank of the Charles River, connected to Boston by a number of bridges. The Harvard Bridge, which carries Mass. Ave. across the river, leads not to Harvard but to MIT—to get to Harvard you take the Anderson Bridge, which empties onto John F. Kennedy Street.

The best way to get around is by subway, the famous Boston "T." The T has four lines, distinguished by color (see the You Probably Didn't Know chapter) and runs from 5:30am or so (6am weekends) to 12:45am. Buses are convenient for a few far-flung sights, but the routes are not as easy to figure out. For most visitors, buses are not a required mode of transportation.

Tour Time

The best overview tour is an 80-minute excursion with **Boston Duck Tours.** The reconditioned World War II amphibious vehicles cover all the high points on a jaunt through the city, then plunge into the Charles River. The guides ("con-ducktors") are very well qualified—they must have licenses to drive on land and pilot on water. This is touristy enough; for the *über*-tourist experience, sling a camera around your neck and hop onto one of the ubiquitous narrated "trolley" tours that trundle around the city. If you're on a tight schedule or have mobility issues, it's hard to knock the convenience and the all-day ticket (you can reboard as often as you like), and riding around is tempting when the weather is hot, wet, or cold. But part of the magic of Boston is seeing it at eye level and at your own pace, not roaring by in a bus tricked out with a trolley chassis. Having said that, we'll look the other way if you just don't feel like hoofing it. Ask a lot of questions before buying tickets (available on board and at busy tourist spots, including **Faneuil Hall Marketplace,** the Aquarium, and the Common); the companies adjust their offerings according to demand, and if you have an itinerary in mind, you can probably find a suitable route. The major companies are Boston Trolley Tours (Tel 617/867-5539; www.historictours.com); Freedom Trail Trolleys (Tel 800/343-1328; www.bostontrolley.com); and Old Town Trolleys (Tel 617/269-7150; www.trolleytours.com). Old Town also runs a separate Cambridge tour from April through October. For a more specialized look at Boston, take an architectural or historical walking tour with the top-notch walking-tour company Boston By Foot (Tel 617/367-3766 for recorded information, or 617/367-2345; www.bostonbyfoot.com). Another excellent

option is the Boston History Collaborative (Tel 617/350-0358; www.bostonhistorycollaborative.org), which creates guided and self-guided tours that focus on maritime history, literary history, immigration, and innovation.

The Lowdown

The fast-track Freedom Trail... Rangers from the National Park Service visitor center at 15 State St. (Tel 617/242-5642; www.nps.gov/bost; mid-April–Nov) lead informative 90-minute tours that cover the stops from the **Old South Meeting House** to the **Old North Church.** At busy times, you might feel a bit like a sheep, but a well-informed one. If even that's too long, take an hour and pick a couple of places that interest you most—or that are closest when inspiration strikes. Starting at **Copp's Hill Burying Ground,** you can enjoy the view of the Charlestown sites, visit the Old North Church, pop into the **Paul Revere House,** and still have time left for a cappuccino on Hanover Street. From the Park Street T entrance, you can see the gold-domed **Massachusetts State House** and read the Boston Common tablet. Crossing the street takes you to **Park Street Church** and the **Old Granary Burying Ground,** final resting place of patriots Samuel Adams and Paul Revere. Follow the trail past sites 5 through 11 (see sidebar, above), snapping away with your camera. You'll end up at **Faneuil Hall Marketplace,** where you can buy postcards of whatever you missed.

Don't believe the brochures... **Faneuil Hall Marketplace,** a much-copied re-creation of a Colonial-era market (including the parallel Quincy Market, North Market, and South Market buildings), revived the economically sagging Boston waterfront when it opened in 1976. The original buildings have great historic weight: Patriots such as Samuel Adams fanned the fires of liberty here, as abolitionists like Charles Sumner did later. **Faneuil Hall** itself—a gift to the people of Boston in 1742 and a tongue twister for tourists ever since (try "Daniel" with a "f")—was remodeled and enlarged in 1805 by Charles Bulfinch, the Boston architect you can't avoid; you can visit the handsome second-floor assembly room, where the tradition of patriotic oratory and civic functions continues. The statue of Samuel

Adams on cobblestones outside, facing City Hall, makes a good meeting point, and you can check out the golden grasshopper weather vane, recalling the one atop the Royal Exchange in London. But very few come today for the history. They come for the shopping. You'll see a lot of stuff that looks familiar—because it's available at your local mall. Looking for real Boston memorabilia? Sure, you'll find that here, too, but usually at a get-rich-off-the-tourists price. The food counters in Quincy Market proper offer some of the best noshing around, from gelati and cookies to baked beans and lobster rolls; if you buy something in the claustrophobic food court, take it outside near the Bostix kiosk, where steps lead up to an out-of-the-way plaza for picnicking. Better yet, cross Atlantic Avenue and enjoy your meal or snack with a harbor view. Or head to one of the nearby historic full-service restaurants, Durgin-Park or Ye Olde Union Oyster House (see the Dining chapter).

Where to feel like a student... Harvard Yard's the obvious place to pretend you're a student at **Harvard University,** an institution so overbearingly excellent that *Boston Globe* columnist Alex Beam impishly refers to it as "WGU," for "world's greatest university." The college's oldest buildings cluster behind redbrick walls in the Yard, which adjoins manic Harvard Square; in the quiet of the Yard, look for Bulfinch's Stoughton and University Halls, as well as the 1742 Holden Chapel and its Georgian Revival counterpart, the 1931 Memorial Church. Sever Hall and Widener Library are impressively massive. Don't miss the whimsical Harvard Lampoon Castle (at Mount Auburn and Plympton sts.), with its facelike front and ibis weather vane. Plenty of students—Harvard or not—seem to be taking Outdoor Terrace 101 at the Au Bon Pain cafe on Mass. Ave. in the heart of Harvard Square—playing chess, suffering existential crises, and sipping endless cups of coffee. It's conveniently near the Harvard University Information Office in Holyoke Center, which can hook you up with a free tour of the campus. **MIT** (**Massachusetts Institute of Technology**) students scarf down Chinese food at Mary Chung's restaurant in Central Square (Tel 617/864-1991, 464 Mass. Ave.) or drink microbrews at the Cambridge Brewing Company (Tel 617/494-1994, 1 Kendall Sq.); otherwise, they're usually squirreled away studying on the decidedly modern campus between the

Longfellow and Boston University bridges. Take a tour starting at the MIT Information Center in the Rogers Building. Boston University students patronize restaurants and fast-food places in Kenmore Square and on Commonwealth Avenue and the pubs and clubs on Brighton Avenue in Brighton. They interact with the Berklee College of Music's guitar players and jazz singers in Kenmore Square, where they mill around the mammoth six-story BU Bookstore (660 Beacon St.) or scout for used CDs in nearby stores. The artsy Emerson College crowd is spreading in and around the Theater District along the edge of Boston Common, an area that can stand some rejuvenation. Tufts University students gravitate to hip Davis Square, on the Red Line in Somerville, where they can hang at the Someday Cafe (Tel 617/623-3323, 51 Davis Sq.) or chow down at the Rosebud Diner (Tel 617/666-6015, 381 Summer St.).

Where to act like a Brahmin... Many of Boston's inbred high-society dynasties have sold their Beacon Hill homes to nouveau riche interlopers and decamped for horsey estates on the North Shore, leaving behind their ancestral institutions. The **Boston Athenaeum,** near the peak of the Hill, is a private library, but several floors of its building and eclectic art gallery are open to visitors (for free!), while guided tours reveal even more of the inner (and upper) sanctum. Balconies where gentlemen (and gentlewomen) scholars bury their heads in a wide variety of tomes look down on the **Old Granary Burying Ground.** When the thinkers get peckish, they can walk across the Common to Locke-Ober, a handsome, dark-paneled restaurant that didn't admit women until the 1970s.

The Brahmins who still live on Beacon Hill are most likely on Chestnut and Mount Vernon streets, and on the "flat of the hill" between Charles Street and the river; in the Back Bay, they're likely to be on relatively quiet Marlborough Street. The only way to see their houses is to take a tour of an unoccupied one. The **Gibson House Museum** in the Back Bay captures upper-middle-class Victorian clutter—photos, curios, plush furniture and carpets, and gloomily tasteful woodwork. On Beacon Hill, the **Nichols House Museum,** an 1804 Bulfinch town house, is a cozy showcase for art and antiques, including pieces by 19th-century sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens. The residence

became a museum when landscape architect and suffragist Rose Standish Nichols died in 1961; if the museum director leads your tour, you're in for a gossipy treat. The **Harrison Gray Otis House** is another Bulfinch town house, this one on the "wrong" side of Cambridge Street, but not to worry—Otis, a Boston mayor and congressman, later moved to another Bulfinch house on the Hill proper (85 Mount Vernon St.), and then another (45 Beacon St.). The footloose Otises didn't leave much of the original furniture and decor, but content yourself with admiring the bright Federalist colors and noble proportions, and possibly hooking into a 2-hour neighborhood walking tour on summer Saturdays. Both of these Beacon Hill houses are administered by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, which could also be the nickname of the stereotypical Brahmin closet. The Brooks Brothers store at the corner of Newbury and Berkeley streets is where they shop—but only when their clothes have completely worn out.

Common ground... Note the division between scruffy, practical Boston Common and the polished, decorative Public Garden, where the **Swan Boats** glide and the world's shortest suspension bridge crosses the lagoon. The Common has more places for homeless people to sleep; you might see Chinese women serenely doing tai chi early in the morning in the Public Garden. The Common was set aside in 1634, partly for "the grazing of cattell." Today it's mostly drab open space, with a playground, two tennis courts, some ugly statuary, and a historic cemetery. The Public Garden, opened in 1839, is a carefully manicured horticultural park with maddeningly indirect walkways and the *Make Way for Ducklings* sculpture.

Matters of state... There are two statehouses on the Freedom Trail, both fascinating, but only one is free. The **Massachusetts State House** looms above Beacon and Park streets, where a third of the visitors are snapping photos of its gleaming golden dome, a third are turned in the other direction snapping photos of the Shaw Memorial (where the Black Heritage Trail begins), and the other third are waiting to board a tourist trolley. You can wait an eternity for a "walk" signal at the intersection, but it's worth crossing the street to explore the grounds and interior of the Charles Bulfinch–designed State House, a neoclassical

redbrick structure built on John Hancock's former pasture in 1798. To the far right and left of the grand main entrance, statues of Daniel Webster and Horace Mann stand triumphantly in the sun; somber bronze statues of Mary Dyer (a Quaker who was hanged on Boston Common) and Anne Hutchinson (a religious reformer banished from the Massachusetts Bay Colony) occupy shady corners. Also on the right, facing the Common, is a bronze statue of John F. Kennedy walking purposefully through autumn leaves. In elegant Doric Hall (designed by Bulfinch), on the second floor, you can pick up a map for a self-guided tour or join a free guided tour on weekdays. Highlights include mosaics, stained glass, ornate carvings, replicas of historic American flags (the originals are too fragile for viewing), large-scale paintings of Colonial history, and, best of all, the Sacred Cod. State legislators conduct business only when the fish, carved out of pine in 1784, hangs over the gallery in the House of Representatives. (In the Senate gallery is a Holy Mackerel.) Note that you can't leave the State House through the main entrance; that's reserved for outgoing U.S. presidents and Massachusetts governors departing office.

For Revolutionary history, visit the **Old State House,** rebuilt and restored several times since 1713. It stands surrounded by modern high-rises at the corner of Washington and State streets. The Congress Street balcony, where the Declaration of Independence was first read to Bostonians on July 18, 1776, overlooks a cobblestone ring marking the site of the Boston Massacre; adorning the building's exterior are replicas of the gold lion and gold-topped unicorn—symbols of the British crown—that jubilant Americans tore down in 1776. Unless an interesting temporary exhibit is up (one often is), you may want to save the modest admission charge for a snack at Quincy Market and skip the interior—permanent displays include historical artifacts such as a vial of tea leaves from the Boston Tea Party.

Secrets of the North End... From Faneuil Hall, make your way through the remains of Big Dig construction to the North End, which is chockablock with food shops, restaurants, and cafes. Soak up the atmosphere by strolling down Hanover or Salem streets in the evening, when elderly residents chat in Italian as they sit in lawn chairs watching the tourists. Stop in a caffè for an espresso, like

the newer wave of immigrants, who are probably discussing soccer and the difficulty of parking. Come back later for a latte at Cafe Vittoria (296 Hanover St.) or for a retro experience at Pizzeria Regina (see the Dining chapter). Oenophiles will want to peruse the excellent selections at the Wine Bottega (341 Hanover St.) and V. Cirace & Son (173 North St.). You may hear exaggerated accounts of the presence of the Mafia here—in fact, drugs are a far bigger problem than the few remaining vestiges of organized crime—but petty turf wars are not uncommon, and there are a few storefronts that don't seem particularly interested in their advertised line of business.

Small wonders on the Freedom Trail... Between Faneuil Hall and the North End, the trail darts through the Blackstone Block, a 17th-century enclave riddled with tiny lanes and 18th-century architecture, including the house of John Hancock's brother Ebenezer at 10 Marshall St. (now private offices). Walk through the amazingly narrow, dark Scott Alley, between North Street and Marshall Street, which was called Marshall's Lane back in 1652. A kiosk in tiny Creek Square records some finds from excavations in the area, including remains of smuggled goods from times of British embargoes. Once in the North End, the trail veers off busy Hanover Street to North Square, where the Tudor-style **Paul Revere House,** built after the Great Fire of 1676, still stands. Revere bought it in 1770, when he already had 5 children, and lived here for nearly 30 years, by which time his two wives had given birth to 16 (8 apiece). Contrast his compact house, the oldest surviving wooden residence in downtown Boston, with the more gracious interior of the adjacent **Pierce-Hichborn House,** built in 1710 and home of Revere's cousins. The excellent self-guided tour and abundant artifacts make this one of the most interesting attractions in the Boston area. Farther along the trail is an even smaller treasure, the narrowest house in Boston: a 3½-story clapboard home less than 10 feet wide at 44 Hull St., across from **Copp's Hill Burying Ground.** Structures like this are "spite houses," so called because they interfere with their neighbors' access or views. A window on each floor faces the street; the entrance is on the side, facing the side of the building next door. It's not open to the public, but there wouldn't be room for anyone, anyway.

Wax on, wax off... Your feet hurt from walking, and historical tidbits are pounding on your brain. Wasn't this supposed to be a vacation? Take a break and head over to **Bella Santé** for a bit of health and hedonism. The award-winning day spa offers an impressive array of body treatments. How 'bout a hot-wax pedicure ending with a peppermint lotion foot rub? Bella Santé is one of a cluster of top day spas sprinkled along tony Newbury Street, including the fabulous **Giuliano.** Wraps, rubs, detoxifying, declogging.... Our tip? Adjust your Newbury Street shopping schedule to include some "me" time.

Small wonders on Beacon Hill... Beacon Hill's tiny alleys and mews, once home to tradesmen, servants, and horses, now harbor fashionable residences; all over the Hill you'll see smaller-than-average entranceways, diminutive balconies, and tiny window boxes. Narrow, cobblestoned Acorn Street, off West Cedar Street between Mount Vernon and Chestnut streets, is to Boston what Lombard Street is to San Francisco: a photo opportunity that countless postcard manufacturers have already seized. Create your own Kodak moments by exploring other equally picturesque hideaways, like Cedar Lane Way (behind busy Charles Street between Chestnut and Pinckney streets), which looks especially Dickensian when the gaslights glow at night. Peer through tunnels at 9 and 74 Pinckney Street, which lead to homes hidden from view. On the less-vaunted north slope, just above West Cedar Street off Phillips Street, is Primus Avenue, a grand name for a terraced brick walkway; the gate is usually unlocked, so walk on through, so long as you're duly quiet. Across the way is an even narrower passage nicknamed Flower Lane, with a gaslight beckoning at the end. Around the corner, off Revere Street, are four cul-de-sacs lined by two- and three-story brick houses, with a few surprises thrown in. The elegant, plantation-style white house at the end of Rollins Place, for example, is actually just a facade, while the windows at the end of Sentry Hill Place are not. There's a lovely oasis at the end of Bellingham Place; up the hill you can slip through the iron gate and meander around the attractive courtyard at Joy Place, as long as you don't act like a thief or a tour guide. No one minds if you walk through Holmes Alley, either—it's not at all pretty, but it's historically significant. Walk to the end of Smith Court

(home of the African Meeting House, off Joy St.), and turn left, where a 2-foot-wide path goes behind several residences, then makes a sharp right through a brick tunnel, which leads to South Russell Street. You've just walked on the tracks of the Underground Railroad, which had several depots in this part of Beacon Hill, a bastion of white abolitionists and free blacks.

Church and state on the Freedom Trail... Okay, so you can't always separate them. The **Old South Meeting House,** at the corner of Milk and Washington streets, across from Benjamin Franklin's birthplace, is where Colonials came to debate pressing matters. The meeting that culminated in the Boston Tea Party was moved here when the crowds at Faneuil Hall grew too large. The second-oldest house of worship in Boston (founded in 1670, rebuilt in 1729), this graceful building is now a museum. The interactive exhibits tell the story of the building and its congregation (which now worships in the Back Bay, returning here only for the Thanksgiving service). **King's Chapel,** an austere granite edifice at the corner of Tremont and School streets, was the first Anglican church in Boston, founded in 1686 and rebuilt in 1749. The church first ran out of money for a steeple; later, after the evacuation of the British, it ran out of Anglicans. It became the world's first Unitarian church in 1789. A bell cast by Paul Revere's foundry still tolls before Sunday worship. The handsome brick **Park Street Church,** built in 1809, lists its historic claims on a plaque out front: the founding of the Handel & Haydn Society in 1815, William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist sermons beginning in 1829, the debut of the anthem "America" in 1831, and so on. The clock on the steeple still works, greeting passengers emerging from the Park Street T station with the time of day and tolling bells. You can take guided tours in July and August, but with so much history and so little time, you might prefer to save your energy for **Christ Church,** better known as the **Old North Church,** on Salem Street in the North End. Here, most historians believe, signal lanterns were hung on April 18, 1775, to warn those across the shore that the British were coming. (Another "Old North" church was in North Square, conveniently near Paul Revere's house, but lanterns hung there wouldn't have been visible from across the harbor.) Built in 1723 and replaced twice since, the tall steeple

of Old North holds the original bells. The gleaming white interior houses an antique clock and organ, plus touching tributes to slain British soldiers; for more history, stop in the funky museum and gift shop next door. Abandoning the trail, cut back to the cafes on Hanover Street through brick-lined Paul Revere Mall, known as the Prado. With its statue of Paul Revere, the mall would be a nicer place to hang out if wind didn't blow so much street trash through it. Across Hanover Street you'll find the only Charles Bulfinch church left in Boston: **St. Stephen's Church** (formerly New North), an 1804 gem that seriously rivals Old North for charm. Thanks to the North End's flood of immigrants, it's Catholic today; Rose Kennedy's christening and funeral took place here.

Back Bay churches even atheists might enjoy...

You can't escape organized religion in Boston, so you might as well enjoy its outstanding architecture. As downtown grew increasingly commercial in the 19th century, many congregations followed the population shift and erected churches in the new Back Bay (hence the phenomenon of names like "New Old South" in Copley Square, which originated on Washington Street in a building that's now part of the Freedom Trail). **Trinity Church** in Copley Square may not look as if it's floating, but 4,502 submerged wooden pilings help hold up its massive square tower, designed by Henry Hobson Richardson. A small colonnaded courtyard lets you escape from the bustle of Back Bay. On the side plaza is Augustus St. Gaudens' outdoor statue of Jesus blessing the church's first rector, Phillips Brooks (who wrote "O Little Town of Bethlehem")—it's over the top in Boston's typically self-congratulatory way. Nearby, another of Richardson's Romanesque churches, **First Baptist** (Commonwealth Ave. and Clarendon St.), has the best nickname: "Church of the Holy Bean Blowers," a waggish reference to the trumpeter angels perched on its belfry over sacramental scenes by Auguste Bartholdi, sculptor of the Statue of Liberty.

Fans of Tiffany glass should head for Newbury Street to check out the Tiffany lamp and windows in the Gothic Revival **Church of the Covenant** and the 16 Tiffany windows in the stately **Arlington Street Church,** with its steeple inspired by London's St. Martin's in the Fields. In Boston, a church is sometimes not just a church: The

Church of the Covenant also houses Gallery NAGA, showing contemporary art, while Arlington Street has flocks of vendors outside selling African tchotchkes. Its congregation is young, urban, integrated Unitarian Universalist. The Gothic Revival Emmanuel Church (15 Newbury St.) draws Bach fans, with a different, professionally performed cantata or other composition every Sunday except in summer (see the Entertainment chapter); its richly decorated Leslie Lindsey Memorial Chapel, named after a victim of the sinking of the *Lusitania,* is poignant. The **First and Second Church,** at Marlborough and Berkeley streets, makes an interesting contrast: It kept its fragmented 1867 facade after a fire in 1968. Paul Rudolph, the architect responsible for the hideous rippled-concrete state office building on Cambridge Street, put a similarly modern building behind the ruins, like a ghastly phoenix rising from the ashes.

Grave concerns on the Freedom Trail... You've heard of living history, right? Boston has its share of costumed performers (a whole colony thrives 40 minutes south at the 17th-century-style **Plimoth Plantation** in Plymouth), but the city's dead history is even more rewarding. The Freedom Trail includes three 17th-century cemeteries where you can scout for Colonial celebrities and gravestones with intriguingly dour inscriptions and macabre engravings, such as skulls with angel wings (sorry, no rubbings allowed). The oldest is **King's Chapel** Burying Ground, which serves as the final resting place for, among others, Elizabeth Pain (died 1704), whom Nathaniel Hawthorne reputedly immortalized as Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter,* and William Dawes, Paul Revere's riding mate, whom Longfellow doomed to obscurity by leaving him out of his famous poem "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." The **Old Granary Burying Ground,** off Tremont Street near Bromfield Street, contains the graves of Revere, Samuel Adams, three signers of the Declaration of Independence, Crispus Attucks and four others slain in the Boston Massacre, and Benjamin Franklin's parents. Most people with children try to find the tombstone of "Mother Goose," believed to be in a family plot. In the North End, **Copp's Hill Burying Ground** rises high above Charter Street for a pleasant view across the water to Charlestown.

Here you'll see monuments to the Puritan dynasty of clergymen Increase, Cotton, and Samuel Mather; African-American abolitionist and Revolutionary soldier Prince Hall; and the remains of thousands more ordinary folk, including the dead of Boston's first black settlement (an area of Copp's Hill known as New Guinea). The British used to shell Bunker Hill from here, while riflemen used the gravestones for target practice; you can still see the bullet holes.

Other grave concerns... The Central Burying Ground isn't on the Freedom Trail, but it's close enough for a detour. Tucked into a corner of the Common near the Boylston T station, the 18th-century cemetery holds the remains of British casualties of the Battle of Bunker Hill, and portrait artist Gilbert Stuart, among others. Across the river, Cambridge's Old Burying Ground—near Harvard Square and adjacent to the First Parish Church (3 Church St.)—is dense with Harvard presidents and Revolutionary War soldiers, including the memorably named Neptune Frost and Cato Stedman. Follow the path between the graveyard and the church to a quiet oasis of quaint old houses; after a block you're back on busy Church Street, not far from the Harvard T stop. A short bus (or cab) ride or invigorating walk from Harvard Square, **Mount Auburn Cemetery,** which opened in 1831, was the country's first garden cemetery and is still one of its finest. Although picnicking isn't allowed on the rolling grounds, many area residents hang out here on sunny afternoons, birding and strolling between the monuments and crypts. You'll pass by the graves of many 19th-century New England luminaries, including Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and "Battle Hymn of the Republic" author Julia Ward Howe (maps and audio tours are available at the guardhouse). On a clear day, the small Norman tower at its center offers a grand view of Boston, Cambridge, and environs, all the way to the Blue Hills. Budding botanists should check out the enormous **Arnold Arboretum** in Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood, a quick T ride from downtown or a 3-mile walk from Kenmore Square along **Frederick Law Olmsted**'s "Emerald Necklace." Wander this leafy 255-acre preserve, with more than 13,000 trees, shrubs, and vines (it's free).

End of the Trail... Hearty souls who complete the Freedom Trail wind up in Charlestown. At the **Charlestown Navy Yard**, fife-and-drum corps and high school bands perform in summer, distracting weary tourists standing in line for a tour of the USS *Constitution,* better known as "Old Ironsides." With beefed-up security, the lines are long enough to be a compelling argument for walking the Freedom Trail in reverse order. The *Constitution* was commissioned in 1797 and is still active and undefeated—though an annual spin around the Harbor on July 4 is the extent of its activity today. Young, eager-to-please sailors in vintage uniforms (kind of like the Cracker Jack kid's) lead free tours of the ship, whose sturdy wooden hull deflected cannonballs during the War of 1812. The tour focuses not only on the ship but on the life of those who served on it; you learn that the medical quarters, for example, were deliberately located far from the crew, so the screams of patients undergoing amputation wouldn't demoralize other sailors. It's free, as is the USS *Constitution* Museum, a good place for tiring out hyperactive children (kids can jump in a hammock or play captain at the helm, which they can't do on the real thing) and visiting the excellent gift shop. The Navy Yard's other attractions include the USS *Cassin Young*, a World War II destroyer; a functioning dry dock; and the country's last ropewalk building. One good reason for taking the trail all the way to Charlestown is to rest and have a beer or burger at the historic Warren Tavern (2 Pleasant St., off Main St.), built in 1780. Then the truly obsessive will press on to the gray granite **Bunker Hill Monument,** at the top of a steep hill—those who get winded easily should take a cab. (Even the tourist trolleys only go as far as the Navy Yard.) Looking like a junior Washington Monument, it's an obelisk of Quincy granite atop Breed's Hill, where the Battle of Bunker Hill was fought on June 17, 1775. You can peruse the functional but low-tech dioramas inside the base, or climb up the monument's taxing flight of 294 steps (strictly optional, especially for the claustrophobic). The windows in the tiny room at the top are quite small, which makes the view somewhat anticlimactic—think of the whole experience as a turn on a primitive StairMaster.

Art museums (the biggies)... Designed in the style of a 15th-century Venetian palazzo to satisfy the whims of one

of the grandest 19th-century Boston grande dames, the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum**—call it the Gardner, as locals do—shows off the irreverence of its socialite founder, who scoured Europe for her booty. In galleries around an ever-blooming interior courtyard, you'll see her treasures—paintings by Rembrandt, Titian, Whistler, and John Singer Sargent. The casual way it's organized makes encountering each gem feel like a personal discovery: Etruscan pottery and papal robes both get classified as Early Italian, for example. To "Mrs. Jack," whose Sargent portrait hangs in a prominent spot, this would have made sense, as would having lunch in the arty little cafe, which opens in good weather onto a charming outdoor courtyard. Don't bother trying to chat up the staff about the 1990 burglary that cost the museum its Vermeer and a dozen other artworks; it's a sore point, and the empty spaces on the walls tell the story.

The **Museum of Fine Arts (MFA),** Boston's greatest cultural gem, is a short walk from the Gardner; depending on your tolerance for staring at art, you can actually do both in one day, if you plan efficiently. Much more of a traditional museum than the Gardner, the MFA—founded in 1870 as part of the **Boston Athenaeum**—contains a great collection of American and European art. While most adults check out the Renoirs, Rembrandts, and Monets, and kids flock to the Egyptian wing, those in the know find inner peace in the quiet, rice-paper-shaded rooms of one of the finest Asian art collections in the country. Along with art and artifacts from Cambodia, Thailand, and India, as well as China and Japan (seek out the intricately decorated tiny glass snuff bottles, actually painted from the inside), this collection houses a serene Buddhist temple room and an attached Japanese garden. If you get hungry, you can dine in a classy sit-down restaurant or gaze at the equally tranquil courtyard from the downstairs cafeteria. When visiting a collection as expansive as this, it's easy to miss some of its more unusual items. Check your coat in the older section, off Huntington Avenue, and you'll see one of the few pieces of art you're actually encouraged to touch: a bronze model of Daniel Chester French's statue of Abraham Lincoln, the centerpiece of the Lincoln Memorial. Visitors' fingers have kept his knees gleaming; on this small scale, Abe seems downright cuddly. Upstairs in the Greek and Roman galleries, look for a model of the Acropolis so detailed that

you can easily spend half an hour scrutinizing it. Any notions you may have about Boston prudishness will be laid to rest by two pieces of ancient Greek porn: an Athenian water jar decorated with copulating couples, whose contortions have led curators to nickname the unknown artist "Elbows Out"; and another Athenian vessel with a red figure and a man in a satyr costume who sports a phallus with a caption translated as "Handsome!"

One last naughty bit: A bacchante statue of a blithely naked nymph once on display at the museum's Huntington Avenue entrance caused such a stir a century ago when it was donated to the **Boston Public Library** that it had to be removed (New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art proved less easily scandalized). A bronze casting of the statue now occupies its originally intended perch in the courtyard fountain. Architect Philip Johnson designed an addition in 1971 to the library's grand 1895 Renaissance Revival building, decorated outside with the names of the Western World's geniuses and replete with marble, mosaics, and murals inside. Unless there's an interesting show of art or artifacts in the lobby, skip the plain-Jane modern part and head to the original's contemplative courtyard or its third-floor Sargent gallery.

Most underrated museums... Visitors often overlook the **Harvard art museums**—the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Sackler—which is too bad: They're an easy walk from Harvard Square, cheaper than the MFA or the Gardner (one admission covers all three; free on Sat morning). And did we mention the art? It's considered the finest university collection outside of Oxford's. The **Fogg Art Museum** has works by big-name Impressionists and Modernists in its Italian loggia-style galleries, plus lesser-known works from the Middle Ages to the current day: The curators obviously like to keep viewers on their toes. The decorative-arts collection is an antiquer's dream; look for the President's Chair, an unpromising-looking seat in which every Harvard president since the 18th century has rested his buns. Behind the Fogg, the extensive **Busch-Reisinger** is the home of art the Nazis considered "degenerate" and lots of other Teutonic treasures; some of the collection remains in its former home, Adolphus Busch Hall, an ornate building with Wagnerian motifs, just a block away. The **Sackler Museum,** like its namesake in Washington, D.C., features

Asian and Middle Eastern art treasures that rival the MFA's in quality, if not quantity. Harvard also boasts four museums of natural history, with a four-for-one admission deal (free Sun morning year-round and Wed after 3 during the school year). The **Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology** is the most interesting, but a recent push to emphasize all four museums' interdisciplinary nature has boosted their appeal. The oldest ethnographic museum in the hemisphere, the Peabody (say "*pea*-b'dy") holds an abundance of information on native peoples and early European settlers, much of it gleaned from excavations by Harvard's own archaeologists. From its Iron Age relics to beautifully carved Northwest totems, this museum successfully mingles science and beauty. The **Museum of Natural History** comprises the **Museum of Comparative Zoology** (with its over-the-top taxidermy collection), The **Botanical Museum** (with its famous but monotonous Glass Flowers), and the **Mineralogical and Geological Museum** (interdisciplinary or not, a tough sell).

On the waterfront... Besides taking a cruise or whale-watching tour from Long Wharf or Rowes Wharf (see "Boston by boat," below), you can connect with the city's maritime heritage by simply hanging out in Christopher Columbus Park, off Atlantic Avenue at the foot of Richmond Street. You can watch the bustling harbor while picnicking here (Quincy Market is across the street, and the North End delis are only a few blocks away). With the Big Dig fading like a traumatic bad dream, the Harborwalk along the waterfront is evolving into a terrific stroll. Look for the blue-sailboat logos and follow them along the coast. The Marriott Long Wharf (296 State St.) holds displays about life on the wharf in Colonial times. Nathaniel Hawthorne worked in a customhouse at the very end of Long Wharf, now a brick plaza with a 270-degree view of the water but, alas, not much shade (it's a delightful place to watch the moon rise in the summer). Even if you're not staying at the upscale Boston Harbor Hotel (see the Accommodations chapter) at Rowes Wharf, it's worth walking through the monumental brick arch off Atlantic Avenue to see the really big yachts when they're in town. For the price of a drink, you can enjoy the view at leisure at Intrigue, the cafe in the lobby, or its seasonal outdoor cafe. In summer, some of those Onassis-style luxury craft sail

over to Fan Pier, across Fort Point Channel, to eavesdrop on the FleetBoston Pavilion (see the Entertainment chapter), where pop artists play under a cool white tent that evokes the Sydney Opera House and affords great water and skyline views. Landlubbers will have to walk or drive over the utilitarian Evelyn Moakley or Northern Avenue Bridge to the seasonal venue.

How to feel like you're in a foreign country... Local color doesn't necessarily mean red, white, and blue. In late summer, head to the North End's weekend celebrations of patron saints from the Southern Italian and Sicilian towns closely associated with the neighborhood. Posters in storefronts and banners across Hanover Street tell which streets will be blocked off for food stalls, carnival games, live bands and DJs, parades, and elaborate religious processions. For the Madonna del Soccorso feast (better known as the Fishermen's Feast), which celebrates the Feast of the Assumption on August 15, a young girl dressed as an angel "flies" several stories high in the air and recites a speech in Italian. It's traditional to pin money to the statue of the saint or the Madonna (the proceeds go to charity), and to pig out on fried calamari, cannoli, *arancini* (fried rice balls filled with meat), and Italian ices. Boston's Chinatown is pretty rinky-dink compared to the larger New York and West Coast versions, but like the North End, it offers a sense of otherness within the city, numerous restaurants and markets, and something to do in August. The August Moon Festival in mid- to late August, like Chinese New Year in late January or early February, features dragon parades, firecrackers, martial-arts demonstrations, and dances (call 617/542-2574 for info on both). Chinatown is really Pan-Asiatown these days, with more recent Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrants thrown into the mix. The shopping isn't exceptional, but the sticky sidewalks always seem crowded. Many restaurants here stay open till 4am, the better to serve club hoppers.

Black Boston... The history of African Americans in Boston goes well beyond Crispus Attucks, who made history in 1770 as the first victim of the Boston Massacre. Not far from his gravesite in the **Old Granary Burying Ground** lies the starting point of the Black Heritage Trail, the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial facing the State House.

The memorial's bas-relief, by Augustus St. Gaudens, honors the leader of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment in the Civil War, immortalized in the 1989 movie *Glory*. Two young groupies leave a weekly bouquet of fresh flowers in the hands of Gould, who sits on horseback above members of America's first black regiment. Head from there to the **Museum of Afro-American History,** in the former Abiel Smith School (the city's first school for black children) on Joy Street, where well-versed National Park Service rangers lead guided tours and point out overlooked details on St. Gaudens' statue (such as the inscription on the Boston Common side). They also take you into the austere upper-level church of the African Meeting House on Smith Court, off Joy Street; the lower level has changing exhibits on African Americans in New England. Many illustrious blacks lived on Beacon Hill from its earliest days: The Middleton-Glapion House (5 Pinckney St.) was built in the 1790s by a black veteran of the American Revolution, George Middleton, and a barber, Louis Glapion. Underground Railroad sites are all over the Hill, including Holmes Alley, at the end of Smith Court. The Lewis Hayden House (66 Phillips St.) bears the name of its abolitionist owner, a former fugitive slave; Hayden threatened to blow the house up if anyone came looking for runaways there, and he had two kegs of gunpowder in his basement to back him up. Abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison and Sojourner Truth spoke at the Charles Street Meeting House (corner of Mount Vernon and Charles sts.), which later became an African Methodist Episcopal church (it now holds offices and shops). The Freedom Trail's **Park Street Church** is also identified with Garrison's antislavery sermons.

The shape of things to come... You're going to want to say you've visited the **Institute of Contemporary Art**, which is currently in a space so small that it has no room for a permanent collection. It's scheduled to move from the Back Bay to the South Boston waterfront (near the federal courthouse on Fan Pier) in 2006. Check out the new building's funky cantilevered design, by the renowned firm Diller + Scofidio, along with the temporary installations in the current building, a former fire station.

The view from above... If you're into panoramic views stretching to New Hampshire, check out the Prudential Center's 50th-floor **Skywalk.** The view is worth the price of admission, and the historic photos and interactive exhibits are a bonus. You can also have a drink two floors up at the Top of the Hub lounge—it doesn't have exhibits, but then, the Skywalk doesn't have anything stronger than water to help you conquer your fear of heights.

The view from a bridge... One of the best views of Boston and Cambridge isn't especially elevated; it's from the Harvard Bridge, which connects Boston to Cambridge (and to the MIT campus, not Harvard) at Mass. Ave. Take in the golden dome of the State House, the forest of downtown high-rises, the brick and greenery of Beacon Hill, and the Back Bay's abundant churches. Looming large are the Hancock Tower, the Prudential Center, and Kenmore Square's Citgo sign. On the north bank of the river are the MIT campus and the smokestack remnants of industrial Cambridge. From here you can see another worthy vantage point, the Longfellow Bridge that connects Kendall Square in Cambridge to Beacon Hill.

Look, up in the sky, it's—you... Real estate developers who want to build along the shore must provide public access, which they all do differently. Two excellent interpretations are high-altitude observation areas that overlook the waterfront. The view is slightly better from Foster's Rotunda, on the ninth floor of the Boston Harbor Hotel complex (enter through 30 Rowes Wharf); it fronts the Inner Harbor, with its abundant water traffic. Oriented more toward Fort Point Channel and downtown, the 14th-floor deck at Independence Wharf (470 Atlantic Ave.) also affords gorgeous vistas. It's more convenient because it's open daily (11–5); the rotunda admits visitors only on weekdays (11–4). You'll need an ID to enter either building.

Boston by boat... If you just want to get out on the water for a quick view, take an MBTA ferry across the Inner Harbor. The most convenient connects Long Wharf, near the Aquarium, to the **Charlestown Navy Yard** for the unbeatable price of $1.50 each way. Several companies offer narrated trips around the harbor, leaving from either

Long Wharf (Boston Harbor Cruises) or Rowes Wharf (**Massachusetts Bay Lines and its Boston Steamship Company**). **Boston Harbor Cruises** serves the intriguing Harbor Islands (see the Getting Outside chapter). You can stay in the calmer waters of the Charles River and compare the skylines of Cambridge and Boston by taking the popular **Boston Duck Tours** (see "Tour Time," earlier). The **Charles Riverboat Company** picks up and drops off passengers at the CambridgeSide Galleria and pokes around the Charles River basin for nearly an hour. And then, of course, there are the **Swan Boats,** the paddleboats that churn slowly around the lagoon at the Public Garden. Tame as hell, but pleasant on a Boston summer day. (The employees who do all the pedaling might disagree.)

A whale of a time... A potential high point of a visit to Boston is a whale watch with the **New England Aquarium** or one of several cruise-boat companies. Tours can run up to 6 hours; naturalists are on board to point out interesting marine life and to ensure the captains don't steer too close to the massive mammals. Although the ships all have amenities to help pass the time en route, make sure no one in your group is prone to seasickness, and bring something to keep the kids entertained, as well as jackets, no matter how high the temperature on shore.

Six hours might seem like a big chunk of your vacation, but unless you hail from another whale-migration area, you won't soon forget this excursion. On a good day you can see 40 whales or more (we counted), and they often wow the crowds by leaping out of the water, swimming beneath the boat, and waving their tails: makes you wonder who is watching whom.

Excursions to Plymouth and P-Town... Three miles south of Plymouth on Route 3A is **Plimoth Plantation,** a meticulously researched, living re-creation of the Colonial village in 1627, weird accents and all. Also on hand: a Native American homesite and a visitor center examining the "irreconcilable differences" between Pilgrims and Native Americans. Plymouth is 40 to 60 minutes from Boston by car—one of the few justifications for having wheels during your vacation. Kids love to ask the Pilgrims about Colonial hygiene and other mysteries, while history buffs will be hard pressed to trip up the well-trained docents. It's a great way

to get outside; anyone heading to the Cape should also plan on stopping here, the least kitschy "living history" park you're likely to find. The town of Plymouth, home of the famous rock, is also well worth a visit.

Every summer, Cape Cod lures thousands of Bostonians away from the stifling city...and into traffic on Route 3. If your itinerary allows, you can avoid the gridlocked highways by taking a boat to Provincetown, at the tip of Cape Cod. If your budget allows, you can make the trip in 90 minutes each way on a high-speed catamaran. The adult round-trip fare is around $60, about double the price of boat service, which takes twice as long. **Bay State Cruise Company** offers both high-speed and conventional trips from Commonwealth Pier at the World Trade Center on Seaport Boulevard (take a water taxi or the ferry from behind North Station). **Boston Harbor Cruises** offers catamaran service only. Leave the city in the morning, have lunch at a sidewalk cafe where you can observe the vibrant gay and lesbian street scene (maybe you'll see a wedding party) or head out to the incredible sand dunes, and return in the afternoon—if you have to. Just make sure to bring a good book and munchies for the trip back.

Best places for gallery hopping... Most visitors to Boston end up on Newbury Street, where art lovers can spend days and never see every gallery. Those in search of real value or contemporary originals—and maybe some home-decorating tips—can visit open studios. The concept is simple: Twice a year, usually for one long weekend in the spring or fall, neighborhood artists open the doors of their studios (which are often their homes) to the public. Boston neighborhoods without particularly artsy reputations often boast a surprising number of artists (they go where the relatively cheap rents are). Usually some central gallery or cooperative space serves as an information depot, with maps and sometimes refreshments. From there, you're on your own. Wear comfortable shoes, and bring your curiosity and your checkbook. Along the waterfront across the Congress Street or Summer Street bridge, the old warehouses of the Fort Point Channel area hold many studios, though soaring real estate values are driving out many of them. Start with the **Fort Point Artists' Community Gallery.** Painting, photography, ceramics, bookbinding, jewelry making, and more thrive here, and collectors can

pick up pieces without hefty gallery markups. Across the river, two gallery spaces in and near Harvard Square brim with the works of members of the Cambridge Art Association (Tel 617/876-0246).

Weirdest bunch of public statuary... On the Back Bay's Commonwealth Avenue Mall, puzzle over a series of unrelated statues, from Leif Eriksson to William Lloyd Garrison, with the obscure Domingo Sarmiento and others in between. Off Charles Street, on Boston Common, is the much-maligned contemporary sculpture *The Partisans,* which portrays dejected-looking soldiers on weary horses. In Liberty Square, between Kilby, Batterymarch, and Milk streets downtown—originally intended to honor the Stamp Act protests of 1765—there's a monument to the Hungarian uprising of 1956 ("to those who never surrendered"). Even though it's a dramatic testament to liberty in its own right (the bronze Hungarian flag has a hole where the Communist symbols were torn out), the modern sculpture intrudes on the quaintness of the square; look up instead at the curving Appleton Building, with its delightful friezes showing different artisans at work. Even stranger is the contrast between two nearby statues—one seated on a park bench, one standing—of the unorthodox mayor famous for the slogan "Vote often and early for James Michael Curley," and the New England Holocaust Memorial (between Congress and Union sts., opposite Faneuil Hall). You'll see dazed visitors wandering through the somber memorial of six glass towers, reading plaques bearing the testimony of Holocaust survivors and witnesses, along with a grim chronology of the horrors that Jews and other groups suffered during World War II. Another plaque ties the whole memorial into the Freedom Trail by reminding passersby what happens in a world without freedom. Then you practically bump into Curley, that merry old pol, who kept his job as mayor even while serving time for fraud. (And who says history doesn't repeat itself?)

Bigger isn't always better... The 62-story John Hancock Tower looms over the Copley Square area; its sheer glass walls reflect **Trinity Church,** the nearby old John Hancock tower (200 Clarendon St.), and the shifting sky. The I. M. Pei design creates a wind-tunnel effect even at the height

of summer; in winter, screaming air currents threaten to knock pedestrians off their feet. For tourism purposes, the Hancock Tower is purely decorative (the 60th-floor observatory has closed), but the old Hancock building has a useful beacon on top that predicts the weather. It has its own rhyme: steady blue, clear view; flashing blue, clouds due; steady red, rain ahead; flashing red, snow instead. Flashing red during baseball season means the Red Sox game has been canceled.

Best patriotic festivals... On Patriots Day, the third Monday in April, "Paul Revere" rides on horseback all the way from Boston's North End to the Minuteman-filled Middlesex village of Lexington. On or around June 17, Bunker Hill Weekend restages the Battle of Bunker Hill in Charlestown (which actually took place on Breed's Hill, as nitpickers can't wait to tell you); every year, it's still a Pyrrhic victory for the redcoats. Both Bunker Hill Day and Patriots Day are city holidays, which means free metered parking—if you can find it.

Nobody does the Fourth of July quite like Boston, as those who've seen the annual Boston Pops concert and fireworks on television may guess. Sure, Washington, D.C., has an equally famous pyrotechnical and musical to-do, but the District of Columbia is just a Yankee Doodle–come-lately in Bostonians' minds. The Hub's celebration lasts a whole week, beginning in late June with Harborfest (Tel 617/227-1528; www.bostonharborfest.com), a waterfront festival that includes Chowderfest on City Hall Plaza, a massive cook-off with an unholy tendency to fall on a blistering-hot day (when the mere thought of warm seafood makes you long for a blizzard). On Independence Day itself, events include a costumed "John Hancock" and other Revolutionary look-alikes reading the Declaration of Independence from the balcony at the **Old State House.** But the real draw is the Pops' celebrity-studded shebang at the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade, which starts drawing picnicking crowds early that morning; by midday, it's not a good place for the claustrophobic, with the Cambridge side of the river only slightly less packed. Is it worth waiting all day to watch the John Phillip Sousa–laden concert in cramped quarters or jockeying for a spot on the Esplanade just to listen to it on tinny speakers, all to have prime seats for the fireworks over the river at its conclusion? Well, several hundred thousand

people seem to think so. When everyone attempts to leave the dimly lit Esplanade at once, though, Cambridge Street, Embankment Road, Storrow Drive, and other arteries, not to mention the narrow footbridges, turn into evacuation scenes from Japanese horror movies. If you don't like crowds, and you really are interested in middle-of-the-road orchestral pabulum, catch the rehearsal concert (sans stars and explosions) the night before.

Tea time... Tea looms large in Boston lore, even if today's Bostonians are more likely to be caught drinking coffee from the ubiquitous Dunkin' Donuts and Starbucks. The Anglophilic ritual of high tea in a posh setting is almost as addictive as Dunkin' Donuts iced coffee. The Bristol lounge at the Four Seasons Hotel and the Ritz-Carlton's elegant upstairs tearoom (see the Accommodations chapter for both) compete for the affections of the crooked-pinkie set. Although the conversations are louder at the Four Seasons, its finger sandwiches, scones, and pastries are better than those at the Ritz-Carlton; both charge a pretty penny to ruin your dinner. The 227-gallon gilded teakettle hanging from the exterior of the Sears Crescent building near the Government Center T station has fascinated Bostonians since it was made in 1873 for the Oriental Tea Company. So have the elephants on the circa 1929 Salada Tea Building (Stuart and Berkeley sts., in the Back Bay), which lumber across its bronze doors, columns, and frieze, in scenes of the tea trade. After a fire, the **Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum** has closed indefinitely; if you're on a family trip, check ahead to see whether it's open. It illustrates the events of December 16, 1773, when Colonials disguised as Indians dumped three ships' worth of highly taxed tea leaves into the harbor (actually at Griffin's Wharf, in an area that's now dry land). The replica of the brig *Beaver* is a goofy attraction that mostly appeals to kids, who enjoy watching costumed employees retrieving bales of tea from the water; admission includes a cup of tea (hot or iced).

Beer here... Of course, you can always skip the tea and head straight for the strong stuff, as long as you're of legal drinking age (21 in Massachusetts). Jim Koch's Samuel Adams Brewing Company is definitely a macro among micros. You can browse through the **Boston Beer Museum**—really just the archives of the Koch brewing family—as you

tour the Sam Adams brewery in Jamaica Plain. The gleaming vats and brewery apparatus are plainly visible at Boston Beer Works (see the Dining chapter), which has a huge variety of ales and lagers and a sprawling menu. Crowds pour into the two Boston locations before and after games at Fenway Park and events at the FleetCenter. No need to drink and drive, or even ride the T: Old Town Trolley offers special Boston and Cambridge brewpub tours. (See the Hotlines & Other Basics chapter.)

Pure fun for little kids... Schedule a ***Make Way for Ducklings* Tour** (spring and summer only), which lets youngsters follow in the footsteps of Robert McCloskey's classic characters. If that doesn't work out, at least show them the Mallard family statues, waddling along in the Public Garden. (The same sculptor, Nancy Schön, created *The Tortoise and the Hare* near the Boston Marathon finish line in Copley Square.) Pass on the agonizingly slow **Swan Boats** unless it's naptime or the line is short. Most parents go crazy preventing toddlers from leaping in while the boat makes a lazy loop around the lagoon.

The **Children's Museum** has an indoor playground for tots and many hands-on displays. Kids under 11 love the changing exhibits here; they start by climbing around the two-story New Balance Climb & Construction Zone maze and move on to activities as diverse as scientific experiments and dressing up in costumes. The giant milk bottle in front of the museum holds a snack bar that's a fun place to pick up lunch.

The **Franklin Park Zoo** is so inconvenient that even many local families have never been there. If your kids are mad for animals and you don't have a zoo at home, it may be worth the trip. It's a shame because recent upgrades have improved the facility—but there's no way around the fact that it's at least 40 minutes from downtown.

Secretly educational stuff for older kids... The area's best family destination is the **Museum of Science** on the bridge between Boston and Cambridge, which fairly crackles with kinetic energy. It has a planetarium, loads of hands-on exhibits, and an impressive IMAX theater. Surf ahead (www.virtualfishtank.com) to create your own sea creature and launch it when you get here. The sharks and

jellyfish at the **New England Aquarium** may appeal to children's bloodthirsty side, even if they've grown too old to get a kick out of fondling starfish in the touch tanks. And the size of those whales you'll see on a whale-watch cruise will wow even the coolest teen. If you must feed the kids "culchah," go to the **Museum of Fine Arts** on weekends, when it offers special activities for youngsters. On any day at the MFA, follow the signs that say "To the mummies" to find children's all-time favorite exhibit. The kitsch factor is high, but some kids enjoy dumping tea off the side of the **Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum** in Fort Point Channel (currently closed for repairs).

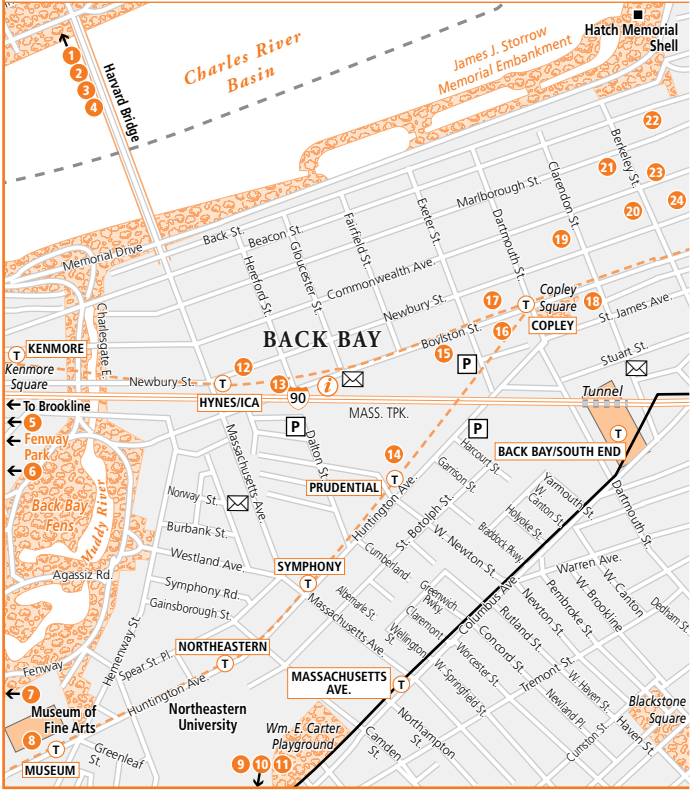
Author, author... Edgar Allan Poe was born in Bay Village, in a house that no longer exists, but famously loathed Boston. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, on the other hand, put down roots almost as deep as those of the spreading chestnut tree under which his village smithy stands. He lived at 105 Brattle Street in Cambridge from 1843 to 1882. George Washington slept and strategized here during the Revolutionary War siege of Boston, when Brattle Street was known as "Tory Row." The **Longfellow National Historic Site** preserves both Longfellow's possessions and Washington's legacy. Even if you can't quote a single Longfellow poem, it's worth a visit to get a fair glimpse of 19th-century Boston life. You can see a memorial to Longfellow's chestnut tree ("Under the spreading chestnut tree/The village smithy stands"), forged by the actual anvil shown under the tree, next to the house where the real smithy lived. That's the Dexter Pratt House (56 Brattle St.), where Hi-Rise at the Blacksmith House now forges luscious pastries. *Little Women* fans will want to make the 40-minute drive to Concord, to Louisa May Alcott's **Orchard House,** where she and her family enjoyed relative prosperity after years of sporadic income. Louisa also lived on Beacon Hill, at 10 Louisburg Sq. (between Mount Vernon and Pinckney sts., two blocks up from Charles St.), an overpraised, oft-photographed spot that can be a little dreary, with tall row houses staring across a dark, fenced-in park and cobblestone streets. Look around when you arrive (we don't know at press time) to see whether the Secret Service is still guarding the home of John Kerry and his wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry.

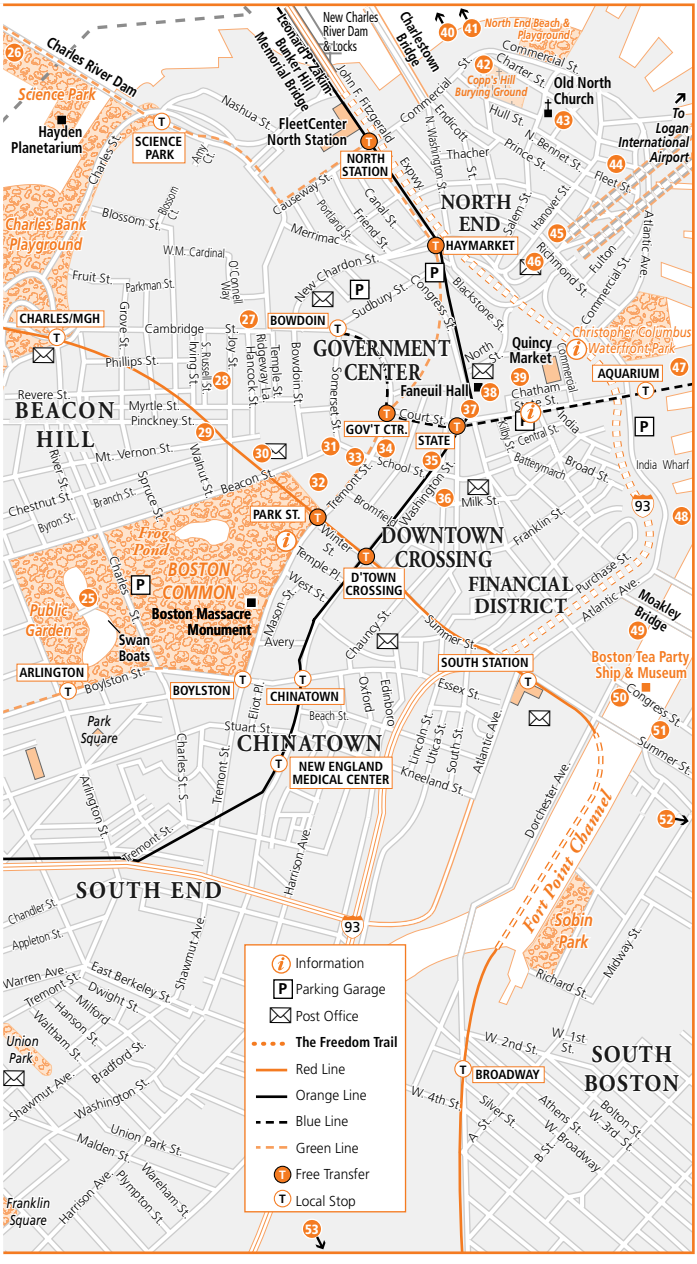
Kennedy country... The supermarket tabloids like to give the impression that the whole clan lives in a big tent in the middle of Boston Common, but in fact, most Kennedys pursue the family business elsewhere. Rose Kennedy admirers still like to view (from the outside only) her birthplace at 4 Garden Court Street in the North End. Her father, Boston mayor John "Honey Fitz" Fitzgerald, was also born in the North End, on Ferry Street. JFK devotees will want to tour the **John F. Kennedy National Historic Site** in Brookline, though he only lived here until he was 3 (get a life, folks!). Since he has to spend time there, Senator Ted Kennedy might have wished for a better homage to his brother than Government Center's sterile John F. Kennedy Federal Office Building, by the firm of Walter "Mr. Bauhaus" Gropius. Much more appealing is the I. M. Pei–designed **John F. Kennedy Library and Museum,** on Columbia Point next to the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston campus. The angular white building juts into the bay; inside, exhibits recall the president's life and times, with lots of videos to explore his personal and political life. It's a good thing a cafe is on-site because there's absolutely nothing else within walking distance. Old Town Trolley (Tel 617/269-7150) has a 3-hour tour on some Sundays that visits his birthplace, **Harvard University,** his statue at the State House, and the library.

Free spirit... Not everything is free along the Freedom Trail, and certainly not elsewhere in Boston and Cambridge. In addition to the commons, churches, college campuses, and cemeteries, which charge no admission, these attractions are free: the **Massachusetts State House; Faneuil Hall; USS *Constitution*** and its museum at the **Charlestown Navy Yard;** the **Bunker Hill Monument;** all historic cemeteries and burial grounds (see "Grave concerns," earlier); and the **Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site**—the landscape designer's house, archives, and appropriately verdant grounds in Brookline. Others sites have discount admission at certain times: the **Museum of Fine Arts** on Wednesday evening; the **Harvard University Art Museums** on Saturday morning; the Harvard museums of natural history on Sunday morning and, during the academic year, Wednesday after 3; and Thursday after 5 at the **Institute of Contemporary Art.**

Map 6: Boston Diversions

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Fort Point Artists' Community Gallery **52**
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Franklin Park Zoo **11**
Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site **6**
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Charles River Dam
Science Park
Hayden Planetarium
SCIENCE PARK
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Blossom Ct.
Blossom St.
Charles Bank Playground
Fruit St.
Parkman St.
W.M. Cardinal O'Connell Way
CHARLES/MGH
Cambridge St.
Phillips St.
Grove St.
Joy St.
S. Russell St.
Irving St.
Temple St.
Ridgeway La.
Hancock St.
BOWDOIN
Revere St.
BEACON HILL
Myrtle St.
Pinckney St.
Mt. Vernon St.
River St.
Chestnut St.
Byron St.
Branch St.
Spruce St.
Walnut St.
Beacon St.
PARK ST.
Frog Pond
BOSTON COMMON
Public Garden
Boston Massacre Monument
Swan Boats
ARLINGTON
Boylston St.
BOYLSTON
Park Square
Arlington St.
Tremont St.
Charles St. S.
Stuart St.
CHINATOWN
NEW ENGLAND MEDICAL CENTER
Oxford St.
Edinboro St.
Beach St.
Eliot Pl.
Avery St.
Mason St.
West St.
Temple Pl.
Winter St.
Bromfield St.
Tremont St.
School St.
Washington St.
Milk St.
D'TOWN CROSSING
DOWNTOWN CROSSING
FINANCIAL DISTRICT
Franklin St.
Purchase St.
Atlantic Ave.
Moakley Bridge
Summer St.
Congress St.
SOUTH STATION
Essex St.
Kneeland St.
Lincoln St.
Utica St.
South St.
Dorchester Ave.
Fort Point Channel
Sobin Park
Midway St.
Richard St.
SOUTH BOSTON
W. 1st St.
W. 2nd St.
W. 3rd St.
W. 4th St.
W. Broadway
Bolton St.
Athens St.
Silver St.
A St.
B St.
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Union Park
Shawmut Ave.
Bradford St.
Waltham St.
Hanson St.
Milford St.
Dwight St.
East Berkeley St.
Warren Ave.
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Union Park St.
Malden St.
Wareham St.
Harrison Ave.
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SOUTH END
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Washington St.
Information
Parking Garage
Post Office
The Freedom Trail
Red Line
Orange Line
Blue Line
Green Line
Free Transfer
Local Stop
Leonard P. Zakim Bunker Hill Memorial Bridge
New Charles River Dam & Locks
John F. Fitzgerald Expwy
Charlestown Bridge
North End Beach & Playground
Commercial St.
Charter St.
Copp's Hill Burying Ground
Old North Church
To Logan International Airport
Hull St.
Thacher St.
Prince St.
N. Bennet St.
Fleet St.
FleetCenter North Station
NORTH STATION
Causeway St.
Nashua St.
Canal St.
Portland St.
Friend St.
Merrimac St.
NORTH END
HAYMARKET
Salem St.
Hanover St.
Richmond St.
Fulton St.
Atlantic Ave.
Commercial St.
New Chardon St.
Sudbury St.
Congress St.
Blackstone St.
Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park
Quincy Market
North St.
Commercial St.
AQUARIUM
Faneuil Hall
Chatham St.
India St.
GOVERNMENT CENTER
Court St.
GOV'T CTR.
STATE
Somerset St.
Bowdoin St.
Battery March
Broad St.
India Wharf
Milk St.
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Boston Tea Party Ship & Museum
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Summer St.
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The Index

See Map 6 on p. 110 for all diversions listings.

Arlington Street Church (p. 92) BACK BAY This Unitarian Universalist church has an ultraliberal congregation behind its ultraconservative brownstone exterior.... *Tel 617/536-7050. www.ascboston.org. 351 Boylston St. Arlington T stop. Weekdays 10am–5pm. Free admission.*

Arnold Arboretum (p. 94) JAMAICA PLAIN This horticultural collection, managed by Harvard University for the Boston Parks Department, is at its blooming best from April–Sept. Green thumbs will definitely want to check out the gift shop.... *Tel 617/524-1718. www.arboretum.harvard.edu. 125 The Arborway. Jamaica Plain, Forest Hills T stop. Daily sunrise–sunset. Visitor center weekdays 9am–4pm; March–Dec weekends 12pm–4pm, Jan–Feb Sat 10am–2pm. Guided tours every 3rd Sat and every other Wed at noon. Free admission.*

Bay State Cruise Company (p. 103) WATERFRONT Serves the Boston to Provincetown route, which runs May–Oct. The huge excursion boat is a classic; catamarans take half the time at twice the price. Boats are also available for private charters.... *Tel 617/748-1428. www.baystatecruisecompany.com. Commonwealth Pier, World Trade Center, 200 Seaport Blvd.. South Station T stop and 15-min. walk, or North Station T stop and ferry from Lovejoy Wharf. Schedules and prices vary.*

Bella Santé (p. 90) BACK BAY One of Boston's top day spas; all the waxing and relaxing you need.... *Tel 617/424-9930. www.bellasante.com. 38 Newbury St., 3rd floor. Arlington T stop. Weekdays 9am–9pm, Sat 9am–6pm, Sun noon–6pm.*

Boston Athenaeum (p. 86) BEACON HILL A private Beacon Hill library and cultural center, founded in 1807 and recently renovated.... *Tel 617/227-0270. www.bostonathenaeum.org. 10½ Beacon St. Park St. T stop. Weekdays 9am–5:30pm, Sat 9am–4pm (closed Sat in summer). Free admission.*

Boston Beer Museum (p. 106) JAMAICA PLAIN Attached to the Samuel Adams brewery in an out-of-the-way part of Jamaica Plain.... *Tel 617/368-5080. www.samadams.com. 30 Germania St. Stony Brook T stop. Tours Thurs 2pm; Fri 2 and 5:30pm; Sat noon, 1 and 2pm (also Wed 2pm May–Aug). Free admission ($2 charitable donation requested).*

Boston Duck Tours (p. 83) BACK BAY/SCIENCE PARK Enjoy 80-min. tours on renovated World War II amphibious trucks that venture out into the Charles River (near the Museum of Science and up to the Hatch Shell). On the street portion, the elevated vehicles give a better view than trolleys.... *Tel 617/723-3825. www.bostonducktours.com. Tours depart from the Prudential Center, 800 Boylston St. Prudential T stop; and from the Museum of Science, Science Park T stop. Tickets available up to 5 days ahead at the Pru, Museum of Science, and Faneuil Hall. April–Nov daily 9am to 1 hr. before sunset; schedules vary. Admission charged.*

Boston Harbor Cruises (p. 103) WATERFRONT For whale-watching, sunset, and Inner and Outer Harbor cruises, as well as the ferry to the Charlestown Navy Yard and trips to Georges Island and Provincetown. Comedy, mystery, and dinner-theater cruises are also available.... *Tel 617/227-4321 (877/733-9425). www.bostonharborcruises.com. 1 Long Wharf. Aquarium T stop. Schedules and prices vary.*

Boston Public Library (p. 82) BACK BAY One of Boston's most striking public buildings, and the first municipal library in the U.S.... *Tel 617/536-5400. www.bpl.org. 700 Boylston St., Copley T stop. Mon–Thurs 9am–9pm, Fri–Sat 9am–5pm; Oct–May Sun 1pm–5pm. Guided tours available; call for hours. Free admission.*

Boston Tea Party Ship and Museum (p. 106) WATERFRONT Replica of one of the ships that patriots boarded in 1773. Currently closed for repairs after extensive fire damage.... *Tel 617/338-1773. www.historictours.com. Congress St. Bridge, South Station T stop. June–Aug daily 9am–6pm; March–May and Sept–Nov until 5pm; closed Dec–March. Admission charged.*

Botanical Museum (p. 98) CAMBRIDGE See Harvard University natural history museums.

Bunker Hill Monument (p. 95) CHARLESTOWN The obelisk commemorates the Revolutionary War battle in which greatly outnumbered Colonials inflicted a stunning number of casualties on the victorious British; National Park Service rangers give hourly

chats in summer.... *Tel 617/242-5641. www.nps.gov/bost. Monument Sq., Charlestown. Community College T stop and 10-min. walk. Daily 9am–5pm. Free admission.*

Busch-Reisinger Museum (p. 97) CAMBRIDGE See Harvard University art museums.

Charles Riverboat Company (p. 102) CAMBRIDGE Narrated cruises on the Charles River, with departures from CambridgeSide Galleria. Season runs from mid-spring through mid-fall.... *Tel 617/621-3001. www.charlesriverboat.com. 100 CambridgeSide Place. Lechmere T stop. Call for schedule and prices.*

Charlestown Navy Yard (p. 95) CHARLESTOWN To make the most of your visit to this sprawling complex, stop first at the visitor information center near the USS *Constitution* and see what activities are available that day.... *Tel 617/242-5601. www.nps.gov/bost. Constitution Rd., Charlestown. Water shuttle from Long Wharf/Aquarium T stop run by Boston Harbor Cruises (see above). Summer daily 9am–6pm; winter daily 9am–5pm. Free admission.*

Children's Museum (p. 107) WATERFRONT Large hands-on museum for kids, with daily activities including crafts, music, and animal visits.... *Tel 617/426-6500. www.bostonkids.org. 300 Congress St. South Station T stop. Daily 10am–5pm, Fri also 5pm–9pm. Admission $1.*

Church of the Covenant (p. 92) BACK BAY Tons of Tiffany glass in the chapel, contemporary art in Gallery NAGA.... *Tel 617/266-7480. www.churchofthecovenant.org. 67 Newbury St. Arlington T stop. Sanctuary by appointment and Sun 9am–noon for services. Free admission.*

Copp's Hill Burying Ground (p. 93) NORTH END Freedom Trail cemetery, overlooking Charlestown.... *Hull and Snowhill sts. North Station T stop. Daily 9am–5pm (until 3pm in winter). Free admission.*

Faneuil Hall (p. 84) DOWNTOWN Upstairs in this Freedom Trail site are a Charles Bulfinch–designed meeting hall, historical paintings, and artifacts of the first Massachusetts militia.... *Tel 617/635-3105. Dock Sq. State Street T stop. Daily 9am–5pm. Free admission.*

Faneuil Hall Marketplace (p. 84) DOWNTOWN Scenic shopping district also known as Quincy Market (after the large center building)

is mediocre but mobbed.... *Tel 617/523-1300. www.faneuilhallmarketplace.com. Bounded by Atlantic Ave. and North St., Congress, and State sts. State Street, Haymarket, and Government Center T stops. Shops Mon–Sat 10am–9pm, Sun noon–6pm; restaurants and bars 11am–9pm (most bars and some restaurants close later).*

First and Second Church (p. 93) BACK BAY Call ahead to see the modern interior rising from the ruined exterior of the church, which turned 100 in 1967 and burned in 1968.... *Tel 617/267-6730. www.fscboston.org. Mon–Fri 9:15am–5pm. 66 Marlborough St. Arlington T stop. Free admission.*

First Baptist Church (p. 92) BACK BAY Back Bay church designed by Henry Hobson Richardson.... *Tel 617/267-3148. www.firstbaptistchurchofboston.org. 110 Commonwealth Ave. Copley and Back Bay T stops. Tues–Fri 11am–2pm and by appointment. Free admission.*

Fogg Art Museum (p. 97) CAMBRIDGE See Harvard University art museums.

Fort Point Artists' Community Gallery (p. 103) SOUTH BOSTON A good launching pad to explore the neighborhood, it also exhibits 10 curated shows of contemporary art a year.... *Tel 617/423-4299. www.fortpointarts.org. 300 Summer St., South Station T stop. Thurs noon–5pm, Fri noon–6pm, weekends 1–5pm. Free admission.*

Franklin Park Zoo (p. 107) DORCHESTER This improving zoo has a walk-through aviary, tropical forest, and a petting barn. It made international news in 2003 when a Western lowland gorilla ran away from home. Buses run from the Forest Hills T stop to the park.... *Tel 617/541-5466. www.zoonewengland.com. 1 Franklin Park Rd., Dorchester. April–Sept Mon–Fri 10am–5pm, weekends and holidays 10am–6pm; Oct–March daily 10am–4pm. Closed Thanksgiving and Dec 25. Admission charged.*

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (p. 109) BROOKLINE National Park Service rangers give hourly tours on weekends of Fairsted, the ivy-covered house of America's most famous landscape architect and park planner. You can check out his designs for Central Park and many of Boston's green spaces.... *Tel 617/566-1689. www.nps.gov/frla. 99 Warren St. Brookline Hills T stop. Fri–Sun 10am–4:30pm. Free admission.*

Gibson House Museum (p. 86) BACK BAY Get a glimpse of Boston's "Upstairs, Downstairs" lifestyle in this Victorian house museum in the Back Bay.... *Tel 617/267-6338. www.thegibsonhouse.org. 137 Beacon St. Arlington T stop. Wed–Sun tours at 1, 2, and 3pm. Admission charged.*

Giuliano (p. 90) BACK BAY One of the cluster of award-winning spas on tony Newbury Street. This one includes all the usual (and some unusual) treatments, along with laser hair removal and acupuncture.... *Tel 617/262-2220. 338 Newbury St. Hynes/ICA T stop. Mon–Wed 8am–8pm, Thurs–Fri 8am–9pm, Sat 8am–6pm, Sun 10am–6pm.*

Harrison Gray Otis House (p. 87) BEACON HILL Hourly tours take visitors around this mansion designed by Charles Bulfinch.... *Tel 617/227-3956. www.spnea.org. 141 Cambridge St. Charles/MGH or Bowdoin T stop. Wed–Sun 11am–4pm. Admission charged.*

Harvard University (p. 85) CAMBRIDGE The Information Office in Holyoke Center at 1350 Mass. Ave. is the place to start the free guided tour of the fabled campus.... *Tel 617/495-1573. www.harvard.edu. Harvard T stop. 2 tours on weekdays, 1 on Sat; summer Mon–Sat 4 tours daily.*

Harvard University art museums (p. 97) CAMBRIDGE One ticket covers the Fogg, the Busch-Reisinger, and the Sackler museums.... *Tel 617/495-9400. www.artmuseums.harvard.edu. Broadway and Quincy St. Harvard T stop. Mon–Sat 10am–5pm, Sun 1–5pm. Free admission Sat 10am–noon.*

Harvard University natural history museums (p. 98) CAMBRIDGE Admission deal similar to the Harvard art museums—four for the price of one—applies for the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology and the Museum of Natural History (actually 3 institutions: the Museum of Comparative Geology, the Mineralogical and Geological Museum, and the Botanical Museum).... *Tel 617/495-3045. www.hmnh.harvard.edu. 26 Oxford St. Harvard T stop. Daily 9am–5pm. Free admission Sun 9am–12pm and Sept–May Wed 3–5pm.*

Institute of Contemporary Art (p. 100) BACK BAY Modern art museum, not in the MFA's league—yet.... *Tel 617/266-5152. www.icaboston.org. 955 Boylston St. Hynes/ICA T stop. Tues–Wed and Fri noon–5pm; Thurs noon–9pm; Sat–Sun 11am–5pm. Admission charged.*

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (p. 96) FENWAY Gardner's fascinating collection of European and American art has been displayed "as is" since 1924.... *Tel 617/566-1401. www.gardnermuseum.org. 280 The Fenway. Museum T stop. Tues–Sun 11am–5pm (and most Mon holidays). Admission charged.*

John F. Kennedy Library and Museum (p. 109) DORCHESTER Exhibits (including a fascinating film) tell the president's story. Free shuttle buses run every 20 minutes from the T stop.... *Tel 877/616-4599. www.jfklibrary.org. Columbia Point, Dorchester. JFK/UMass T stop. Daily 9am–5pm. Admission charged.*

John F. Kennedy National Historic Site (p. 109) BROOKLINE JFK's earliest home.... *Tel 617/566-7937. www.nps.gov/jofi. 83 Beals St. Coolidge Corner T stop. May–Oct Wed–Sun 10am–4:30pm. Admission charged.*

King's Chapel (p. 91) DOWNTOWN Former Anglican bastion on the Freedom Trail, offering weekly music events on Tuesdays at 12:15pm. The burying ground next door is the oldest in Boston.... *Tel 617/227-2155. Tremont and School sts. Park Street T stop. Chapel summer daily 9:30am–1pm; winter Sat 10am–2pm. Burying ground daily 8am–5:30pm (until 3pm in winter). Donation requested.*

Longfellow National Historic Site (p. 108) CAMBRIDGE George Washington and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow slept here (not together). The latter liked the house so much when he boarded here that he wound up marrying the owner's daughter.... *Tel 617/876-4491. www.nps.gov/long. 105 Brattle St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. May–Oct Wed–Sun 10am–4:30pm; tours at 10:30am, and 11:30am, 1, 2, 3, and 4pm. Admission charged for tour.*

***Make Way for Ducklings* Tour** (p. 107) BACK BAY Book-based tour run by a nonprofit educational foundation takes children and their adult companions through Beacon Hill and the Public Garden. Reservations necessary.... *Tel 617/426-1885. www.historicneighborhoods.org. Spring–summer Fri–Sat 11am.*

Massachusetts Bay Lines/Boston Steamship Company (p. 102) WATERFRONT Daytime harbor cruises for families, evening music cruises for grown-ups.... *Tel 617/542-8000. www.massbaylines.com. 60 Rowes Wharf. Aquarium T stop. Schedules and prices vary.*

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (p. 85) CAMBRIDGE Free tours, weekdays at 10am and 2pm, start at the Information Center and point out the sprawling campus's outstanding modern art and architecture. Be sure to check out the trippy new Strata Center, designed by Frank Gehry.... *Tel 617/253-4795. http://web.mit.edu. 77 Massachusetts Ave., Kendall/MIT T stop. Mon–Fri 9am–5pm.*

Massachusetts State House (p. 87) BEACON HILL Wander through the maze of the Bulfinch original building and modern additions.... *Tel 617/727-3676. www.mass.gov/statehouse. Beacon and Park sts. Park St. T stop. Weekdays 9am–5pm. Free admission.*

Mineralogical and Geological Museum (p. 98) CAMBRIDGE See Harvard University natural history museums.

Mount Auburn Cemetery (p. 94) CAMBRIDGE From the T, take bus 71 or 73 to this favorite haunt of both the dead and the quick.... *Tel 617/547-7105. www.mountauburn.org. 580 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge, Harvard T stop and 30-min. walk or 10-min. bus ride. daily 8–7 summer; 8–5 winter. Free admission.*

Museum of Afro-American History (p. 100) BEACON HILL Part of the Black Heritage Trail on Beacon Hill, this recently restored museum occupies the buildings that housed the first city school for black children and the African Meeting House (behind the school).... *Tel 617/725-0022. www.afroammuseum.org. 8 Smith Court, Park Street T stop. daily 10–4, closed Sun in winter. Suggested donation.*

Museum of Comparative Zoology (p. 98) CAMBRIDGE See Harvard University natural history museums.

Museum of Fine Arts (p. 82) FENWAY Plan to spend at least half a day here; mummies and Monets are the big draws.... *Tel 617/267-9300. www.mfa.org. 465 Huntington Ave. Museum T stop. Daily 10am–4:45pm (Wed till 9:45pm), West Wing Thurs–Fri till 9:45pm. Admission charged; admission by donation Wed 4–9:45pm; reduced admission on Thurs and Fri after 5pm.*

Museum of Science (p. 107) SCIENCE PARK A planetarium and super-wide-screen theater supplement the 450-plus interactive exhibits.... *Tel 617/723-2500. www.mos.org. Science Park. Science Park T stop. Daily 9am–5pm (Fri till 9pm); July 5–Labor Day and school vacation weeks 9am–7pm. Admission charged.*

New England Aquarium (p. 102) WATERFRONT Several levels of fish tanks and exhibits spiral around the huge central tank.... *Tel 617/973-5200 (617/973-5281 for whale-watch info). www.newenglandaquarium.org. Central Wharf. Aquarium T stop. July to Labor Day Mon–Thurs 9am–6pm, Fri–Sun 9am–7pm; day after Labor Day to June Mon–Fri 9am–5pm, Sat–Sun 9am–6pm. Admission charged.*

Nichols House Museum (p. 86) BEACON HILL Art-filled 1804 town house on Beacon Hill, designed by Bulfinch, is open for tours.... *Tel 617/227-6993. www.nicholshousemuseum.org. 55 Mount Vernon St. Park St. T stop. Tours every half-hour noon–4pm. May–Oct Tues–Sat; Nov–April Thurs–Sat. Admission charged.*

Old Granary Burying Ground (p. 84) DOWNTOWN Freedom Trail graveyard where such patriots as Paul Revere and Samuel Adams rest in peace.... *Tremont St. Park St. T stop. Daily 9am–5pm (until 3pm in winter).*

Old North Church (Christ Church) (p. 91) NORTH END North End church where the "two if by sea" lanterns were hung to warn patriots of British movements. Free tours every 15 minutes; behind-the-scenes tour by reservation. The gift shop next door also serves as a museum.... *Tel 617/523-6676. www.oldnorth.com. 193 Salem St. Haymarket T stop. Daily 9am–5pm. $3 donation requested.*

Old South Meeting House (p. 91) DOWNTOWN The Freedom Trail landmark where thirsty Colonials met to plan the Boston Tea Party. Now a museum.... *Tel 617/482-6439. www.oldsouthmeetinghouse.org. 310 Washington St. Downtown Crossing T stop. April–Oct daily 9:30am–5pm; Nov–March 10am–4pm. Admission charged.*

Old State House (p. 88) DOWNTOWN Dwarfed by downtown Boston, this charming museum has a permanent display focusing on the Revolution and second-floor exhibits on more modern themes.... *Tel 617/720-3290. www.bostonhistory.org. 206 Washington St., State Citizens Bank T stop. Daily 9am–5pm. Admission charged.*

Orchard House (p. 108) CONCORD Guided tours lead you through the house where Louisa May Alcott lived.... *Tel 978/369-4118 (call for directions). www.louisamayalcott.org. 399 Lexington Rd., Concord. April–Oct Mon–Sat 10am–4:30pm, Sun 1–4:30pm; Nov–March weekdays 11am–3pm, Sat 10am–4:30pm. Sun 1–4:30pm. Closed Jan 1–15. Admission charged.*

Park Street Church (p. 91) BEACON HILL Guided tours of the Congregational landmark run Tuesday through Saturday in summer. Otherwise, content yourself with browsing the more interesting Old Granary Burying Ground around the corner.... *Tel 617/523-3383. www.parkstreet.org. Park and Tremont sts. Park St. T stop. Tours July–Aug Tues–Sat 9:30am–3:30pm. Sun services year-round 8:30 and 11am, 4 and 6pm. Free admission.*

Paul Revere House (p. 89) NORTH END This frame house was almost 100 years old when the patriot moved in; the restored interior has furnishings from Revere's time and earlier.... *Tel 617/523-2338. www.paulreverehouse.org. 19 North Sq., Haymarket T stop. Nov–April 15 daily 9:30am–4:15pm; April 16–Oct 31 till 5:15pm. (closed Mon, Jan–March). Admission charged.*

Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (p. 98) CAMBRIDGE See Harvard University natural history museums.

Pierce-Hichborn House (p. 89) NORTH END Next door to Paul Revere's home, this larger brick house was owned by his cousins.... *Tel 617/523-2338. 29 North Sq. Haymarket T stop. Call ahead for tour schedule. Admission charged.*

Plimoth Plantation (p. 102) PLYMOUTH Historical re-creation of Pilgrim settlement, with costumed interpreters. Take I-93/Rte. 3 south to Braintree, follow Rte. 3 to Exit 4 in Plymouth, and follow the signs.... *Tel 508/746-1622 (800/2-MAYFLO). www.plimoth.org. Route 3A, Plymouth. April–Nov daily 9am–5pm. Admission charged.*

Prudential Center Skywalk (p. 101) BACK BAY The city's observatory has breathtaking views and interesting exhibits.... *Tel 617/859-0648. 800 Boylston St. Prudential T stop. Daily 10am–10pm. Admission charged.*

Sackler Museum (p. 97) CAMBRIDGE See Harvard University art museums.

St. Stephen's Church (p. 92) NORTH END Bulfinch gem in the North End, across the Prado from Old North.... *Tel 617/523-1230. 401 Hanover St. Haymarket T stop. Daily 8am–5pm. Mass Tues–Fri 7:30am. Free admission.*

Swan Boats (p. 87) BACK BAY Pedal-powered barges traverse the Public Garden lagoon from mid-April through mid-September.... *Tel 617/522-1966. www.swanboats.com. Public Garden. Arlington T stop. Spring daily 10am–4pm; summer daily 10am–5pm; Labor Day to mid-Sept weekdays noon–4pm, weekends 10am–4pm. Admission charged.*

Trinity Church (p. 92) BACK BAY Admire the 1877 edifice from Copley Square.... *Tel 617/536-0944. www.trinitychurchboston.org. 206 Clarendon St. Copley T stop. Daily 8am–6pm. Admission charged.*



GETTING

OUTSIDE



When it comes to recreation, Bostonians go to the river. Along both sides of the Charles, runners, walkers, cyclists, and in-line skaters weave perilously in and out of each other's way. Sailboats, Duck Tour amphibious vehicles, and rowing shells—from single sculls to eight-person racing machines—share the surface of the river, making it almost as busy as the banks in good weather. Crew in Boston, like running, is extremely competitive. You only have to visit the great preppie mating ritual—the Head of the Charles Regatta, in late October—to understand how deep rowing's roots go.

The Lowdown

Parks to get lost in... You don't have to run, bike, or blade through Boston to enjoy the city's greenery (or winter snow). Landscape designer Frederick Law Olmsted's masterpiece of urban parks is the "Emerald Necklace." Its jewels—Boston Common, the Public Garden, the Esplanade, the Commonwealth Avenue Mall, Charlesgate, the Back Bay Fens, Muddy River, Jamaica Pond, Arnold Arboretum, and Franklin Park—offer a quick escape from urban din and density. The parks in central Boston are more familiar than those farther away. **The Fens,** for example, make for a lovely stroll before or after a visit to the MFA, but most people know them better for their disturbing tendency to catch fire during times of drought. **Jamaica Pond** draws an ethnically diverse crowd of grandparents and grandchildren, Caribbean fishermen, crunchy hippy couples, and exercising yuppies. The ostensibly educational **Arnold Arboretum** provides quiet bowers for romantic strolls, and rough-hewn Franklin Park attracts hikers, family run-over from the zoo, and golfers who can't afford country clubs. Frisbee players and in-line skaters tend to stick to the **Esplanade** and the far (Cambridge) side of the Charles River basin. In spring and summer, students sunbathe on the docks along the Esplanade. Part of **Memorial Drive in Cambridge** becomes one long pedestrian zone on summer Sundays. Like city parks everywhere, including **the Common and Public Garden,** these parks should be avoided after dark. Although few rangers are on hand to enforce the rule, you're supposed to walk your bike through the Public Garden—as your fellow park-goers might remind

you at the tops of their lungs. The **running trails** (see "Run for your life," later) are favorites of walkers, too. You can find out about other activities in these urban oases by calling the **Parks and Recreation Department** (Tel 617/635-4505).

The islands you've never heard of... The overlooked gem of outdoor getaways lies just offshore: the **Boston Harbor Islands** (Tel 617/223-8666; www.bostonislands.com). From May through early October, you start by taking a Boston Harbor Cruises ferry (Tel 617/227-4321; www.bostonharborcruises.com; $10) from Long Wharf to 30-acre **Georges Island.** It's home to the remains of 19th-century Fort Warren, a prison for Confederate soldiers during the Civil War, and one of the park's only concessions (very important to remember, since there's no fresh water). From July through Labor Day, you can hop a free water taxi from there to **Bumpkin, Gallops, Grape, Lovells, and Peddocks islands;** others are accessible only by private boat. You can picnic on Georges and the other islands with taxi service, and camp (somewhat primitively) on four of them. Call the main number for information about camping permits and procedures. Peddocks is the largest harbor island, at 185 acres; rangers give guided tours of the ruins of Fort Andrews, built in 1900. On 60-acre **Lovells Island,** you can hike through woods and meadows and around World War II installations, as well as swim (although wading might be a better idea, thanks to the improved, but occasionally still gross, condition of the water). Grape, also about 60 acres, is perfect for birding, while its Hingham Bay neighbor, 35-acre **Bumpkin,** has quiet trails and stone ruins. In the center of it all, 16-acre **Gallops** has World War II remnants and sweeping views of the harbor. Before you get too excited about these idyllic outer-bay retreats, remember that you need to lug your own water, that poison ivy abounds, and that Logan International flight paths are directly overhead. If you can ignore the roar of jet engines, Boston and its troubles will seem far away indeed.

On Walden Pond... When he wasn't sulking in jail, Henry David Thoreau liked to commune with nature at **Walden Pond** (Tel 978/369-3254; Rte. 126, Concord; 8am to sunset year-round; $5 per car; no pets). The *ur*-hippie's rustic

retreat is now a reservation open for hiking, swimming, and boating (no gas engines). What's more, it's just a 40-minute drive from the city. Formed (like Jamaica Pond) by glaciers, Walden Pond is 100 feet deep at points, with 62 acres of water that's warmest in July and August, when a lifeguard is on duty. If you don't feel like taking a dip, you can tackle the 1.7-mile walking trail around the pond; there are lots of roots and rocks to clamber over, so wear appropriate shoes. In the summer, on holiday weekends, and at peak fall foliage times, you'll want to arrive before 10am, when the parking lot usually fills up.

Run for your life... The **Charles River** and the **Emerald Necklace parks are** certainly good places to run, but it doesn't quite explain why running is such a mania in Boston. Could it be the Puritan view that life is suffering, so why not add a little more? Or is it the fact that the minimal necessary equipment appeals to parsimonious Yankees? In any case, the New England tradition of marathoners like Joan Benoit Samuelson and Bill Rodgers inspires members of Boston's numerous competitive running clubs and solo striders. Although many hotels give guests maps of popular running routes, it's easiest just to head to the Charles and pick two bridges to loop around. The full route, about 17 miles, takes you from the Science Museum Bridge (Monsignor O'Brien Hwy.) to the Watertown Bridge and back. The shortest loops, under a mile, connect Allston (on the Boston side) with Harvard University: Start at either the Anderson or Western Avenue bridge and loop back at the Weeks footbridge. Whatever the distance, watch out for cars at every intersection—the green light gives pedestrians the right of way, but that's cold comfort when you're flat on your back in a crosswalk. If you're going for distance, keep in mind that **above the Harvard Bridge,** the Cambridge side is more scenic—narrow stretches in Allston and Brighton on the Boston side occasionally pass by industrial-looking areas. You'll also want to carry water. The few fountains close to the trail are near **Community Boating** and the **Hatch Shell on the Esplanade** (which also has public restrooms), and even those are turned off in winter. Wind often buffets the trail. The Cambridge side is a little more protected than the Boston side, so plan your route accordingly and pack wind

gear in winter. And always be careful around abutments—if you have any trouble on this generally safe path, it's likely to be where you can't see far ahead.

The best medium-distance route may be between the **Longfellow** and **Harvard bridges.** Just under 3 miles, the loop goes from the foot of Beacon Hill past the Hatch Shell and a lagoon-dotted stretch of the Esplanade that hugs the Back Bay, with the Charles to your right. You cross the river at its widest point on the Harvard Bridge, where painted "Smoots" mark your progress (see the You Probably Didn't Know chapter). On the Cambridge side, you'll pass stately college buildings and get a sweeping view of the Boston skyline on the way to the "Salt and Pepper" or Longfellow Bridge—so called because the ornamental posts at either end look like salt and pepper shakers. On either side of the water, the predominantly redbrick Cambridge hotels and offices square off against the glassy towers of the Massachusetts General Hospital complex in Boston's old West End. Of course, you can start anywhere along the loop; it's easy to reach from the Esplanade and Cambridge. The 2-mile loop around the Science Museum and Longfellow bridges is less picturesque but also has less foot traffic.

Experienced Boston runners seeking a change of pace navigate the winding courses from **the Fens to Jamaica Pond,** or from there to the Arnold Arboretum—it's best to consult a map for these two. The **Southwest Corridor** is an easier-to-follow paved trail that parallels the Orange Line, going from Back Bay Station to Forest Hills, near the Arboretum. Don't run in the Corridor or the Fens at night, though. Those looking for a hill workout should head to **Beacon Hill.** For the longest, highest trek, start at Charles Street and go up Mount Vernon, which has the stateliest homes. Any number of other, narrower streets are good, too. For track workouts, the outdoor track at **MIT in Steinbrenner Stadium** (on Vassar St. in Cambridge, near the Harvard Bridge) is home to several running clubs' weekly workouts—except in the coldest months. In season, show up Tuesday evening at 6:30pm if you want to pace yourself against them. Any other questions? Get advice from the knowledgeable staff at the Bill Rodgers Running Center in the North Market building of Faneuil Hall Marketplace (See the Shopping chapter).

The Marathon... No discussion of local running would be complete without mentioning the **Boston Marathon,** even though plenty of Bostonians have only watched it on television. It's on the third Monday in April, a state holiday known as Patriots Day. Plan ahead if you don't want to visit the city when casually dressed, physically fit tourists take over. (You must run a qualifying time at another marathon in order to be one of the 9,000 participants.) The 26.2-mile course starts at the town green in Hopkinton and goes through Framingham, Ashland, Natick, Wellesley (the halfway point, traditionally the realm of an enthusiastic crowd of Wellesley College students), Newton (home of Mile 21's Heartbreak Hill, the 3rd in a series of major uphill stretches where most runners begin to hit the wall), and Brookline. It winds up in Copley Square, jammed with spectators. A note to onlookers: Commonwealth Avenue at Kenmore Square has good views around the 25-mile mark, and people arrive early to stake out good vantage points along the final quarter-mile, on Boylston Street from Hereford to Dartmouth streets. If you're thinking of entering, contact the Boston Athletic Association (Tel 617/236-1652; www.bostonmarathon.org) for details. If you just want to visit the scene of the crime, the finish line is usually visible on Boylston Street for months after the race. *The Tortoise and the Hare* sculpture near the fountain in Copley Square also commemorates the event, second in hoopla only to the Fourth of July.

Pedal pushers... Despite the occasional daredevils bent on running you over, most cyclists in Boston avoid city streets, with good reason. Cambridge has some bike lanes, but local drivers have their own inimitable way of roaring the wrong way down one-way streets, blowing through stoplights, and generally ignoring speed limits. Consequently, the two nearest bike trails receive heavy use. The nearly 18 miles of the paved Dr. Paul Dudley White Bike Path—with running trail on both sides of the Charles River—run from the Museum of Science Bridge to Watertown. (See "Run for your life," earlier). If you're on a bike, you're supposed to stay nearer the road than the river—where runners, walkers, and skaters already jostle for space. But pedestrians and cyclists end up dodging each other anyway; don't plan on setting any speed records here. The 11-mile Minuteman Bikeway

follows an old railroad track from the Alewife T, at the end of the Red Line in North Cambridge, through the towns of Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford. It can be very busy with families on weekends.

So where to pick up your spokes? Each side of the Charles has an established rental shop. Both require a credit card and picture ID; expect to pay about $30 for a full day's rental. Community Bicycle Supply in the South End primarily rents mountain bikes and hybrids (Tel 617/542-8623; 496 Tremont St. at E. Berkeley; www.communitybicycle.com; rental hours 10am–8pm daily; April–Sept). In Cambridge, Cambridge Bicycle rents cruisers (Tel 617/876-6555; www.oldroads.com/cb.html; 259 Massachusetts Ave., near Windsor St. outside Central Sq.; open Mon–Sat 10am–6pm, and Sun noon–5pm). Both also sell or rent helmets and locks, sell new bikes, and do repairs.

Blade runners... Boston has not escaped the scourge of in-line skating (also called Rollerblading). Not only is it a great excuse to wear skintight synthetic outfits in colors not found in nature, it's also great for showing off concrete versions of moves like the full gainer, and generally adding to the tranquil nature of Boston's streets and sidewalks. Many bladers seem to have graduated to illegal skateboarding, but especially on weekends, they continue to swarm like locusts. On Sundays from 11am till 7pm (May–Oct), a 1.5-mile swath of Cambridge's Memorial Drive closes to auto traffic from Western Avenue to the Eliot Bridge—the pedestrian zone is for everyone, but the people most likely to tip over and crush you will hog your attention. The Beacon Hill Skate Shop—in Bay Village, not Beacon Hill—rents and sells in-line skates, with padding, and sells skateboards (Tel 617/482-7400; 135 Charles St. S. at Tremont St.; open Mon, Wed–Sat 11am–6pm, Sun noon–5pm; $15 a day; MC or V required for security deposit).

Swimming holes in the concrete jungle... You can't swim in the Charles River, and Boston Harbor, though cleaner, isn't out of the (polluted) water yet. So it's either join the masses at the North Shore beaches, take a dip in Thoreau's beloved Walden Pond, or hunt for a decent pool in the city. Sadly, they're in short supply. Of the hotels that have pools, some are outdoors with a limited season, and

many are too small to get much exercise in. The best hotel pool for lap swimming is the Boston Harbor Hotel's 60-yard beauty, but it's for guests only. Three YMCAs around town have swimming pools open to the public for $10 a day. Two nothing-fancy outdoor public pools with separate wading areas for kids are within most tourists' reach, just off the water with good views and cooling breezes. The Mirabella Pool in the North End (Commercial and Foster sts.) is open in July and August only; you'll have to pay for a membership, but it's only about $10. Lee Pool (Tel 617/523-9746; in Charlesbank Park near Charles and Blossom sts., across from the Massachusetts General Hospital complex) is free and generally open daily from Memorial Day through Labor Day. It's one of 17 pools in the Greater Boston area managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (Tel 617/727-1300). If you just want to get your toes (or your kids' toes) wet, the Frog Pond skating rink on Boston Common becomes a wading area from July 4 through Labor Day; it's open daily from 10am to 6pm. Like the rest of the Common, it has its share of street people napping on the sunny benches.

The club scene... If dodging traffic and trekking around the Freedom Trail doesn't give you enough of a workout, several health clubs have daily passes for visitors. The Wang YMCA in Chinatown (Tel 617/426-2237; 8 Oak St., at Washington St.), the Armed Services YMCA at the Charlestown Navy Yard (Tel 617/241-2854; 150 Second Ave.), and the **Central Branch YMCA** near Symphony Hall (Tel 617/536-7800; 316 Huntington Ave.) charge $10 a day to use the facilities, including a swimming pool and weight room.

Whatever floats your boat... In the middle of Jamaica Plain lies, yes, Jamaica Pond, a 70-acre, 70-foot-deep pond (at high water) where you can rent rowboats and 15-foot **Precision** sailboats in season (Tel 617/522-6258; rowboats April to mid-Oct, $10 an hour for Boston residents, $12 an hour for nonresidents; sailboats July to Labor Day, $15 an hour for Boston residents, $20 an hour for nonresidents). On hot days, this is a good place to practice the New England ethic of self-denial. There's absolutely no swimming because the pond is a backup reservoir for the city.

Community Boating (Tel 617/523-1038; www.community-boating.org), on the Esplanade between the Hatch Shell and the Longfellow Bridge, offers unlimited instruction and use of boats and sailboards to members, with proof of swimming ability and a checkout test. The Learn to Sail package is $75; a 2-day visitor membership costs $100; and a 60-day pass goes for $125. Children 10 to 18 can sail all summer (mid-June to late Aug) for $1. The season runs from April through October, from 1pm to sunset weekdays, and 9am to sunset weekends and holidays.

Ice, ice, baby... One of Boston's redeeming qualities in winter is skating at the restored **Frog Pond** rink on **Boston Common** (Tel 617/635-2120). The reasonable prices ($3 for adults, free for kids under 14; skate rental $7 adults, $5 kids) make it insanely popular—on weekend afternoons, the ice surface gets as crowded as a rush-hour subway car. Come early or on a weekday to try out your Michelle Kwan impersonation. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (Tel 617/727-1300) operates about a dozen other public rinks in the Greater Boston area, but the ones you might be able to get to don't rent skates—stick to the Frog Pond.

Hitting the beach... Incredibly, some Southie residents cherish their beaches enough to have made them the site of Southern California–style "locals only" turf wars. The harbor cleanup has made great strides, but the flags that signal unsafe pollution levels still crop up at times. You'll probably feel safest using the city beaches for strolling and sunning only. North Shore beaches (most South Shore beaches are private or have hostilely small parking areas) are a good option if you have to feel sand between your toes. The most accessible is Singing Beach in Manchester, just under an hour from North Station by commuter rail. At the end of the line in Rockport, a couple of small sandy beaches lie within walking distance of the station—but it's an awfully long ride for an awfully crowded experience. The first beach out of town, Revere, is a big muscle-car cruising scene—with all that that implies—but it is accessible by T (Revere Beach on the Blue Line).

Tee time... Unfortunately, this part of New England is known more for its golf courses that don't let people play than for the ones that do. The **Country Club in Brookline,** site of the 1999 Ryder Cup, is the best known of these. Fortunately, more democratic courses dot the fringes of Boston and Cambridge. Greens fees are for nonresidents playing 18 holes; resident and 9-hole fees are lower. In Dorchester's Franklin Park, the nicely restored **William Devine Golf Course** is 6,009 yards, par 70 (Tel 617/265-4084; weekdays $26, weekends $34). Bobby Jones worked on his game here as a Harvard undergrad—but no pressure. In Boston's Hyde Park neighborhood, across from Stony Brook Reservation, the 18-hole **George Wright Golf Course** opens daily at dawn. The par-70, 6,400-yard course is more difficult and more picturesque than Franklin Park's. It's tighter and more heavily planted with trees, but crowded nonetheless (Tel 617/364-2300; 420 West St.; weekdays $30, weekends $36; rental clubs, carts, and lessons available). Across the river in Cambridge is the **Fresh Pond Golf Course,** a 9-hole, 3,161-yard, par-35 layout (Tel 617/349-6282; 691 Huron Ave.; weekdays $29, weekends $36). Can't get enough? Contact the Massachusetts Golf Association (Tel 617/449-3000; www.mgalinks.org) for info on member courses throughout the state.


SHOP

PING

5

Basic Stuff

Picture a khaki-clad preppie setting down a Brooks Brothers bag just long enough to open a package from L.L.Bean. If that's how you envision a fashionable Bostonian, it's time to adjust your focus. Sure, plenty of Bostonians run around in Talbots twin sets and Lilly Pulitzer slacks—but the last person we saw in Lilly Pulitzer slacks was a guy (in women's slacks—and the pattern wasn't doing his hips any favors, either). One stroll down Newbury Street will catch you up: The style-conscious don't have to do all their shopping in New York. In fact, they may not need to do any of it.

That doesn't mean you won't find yourself itching to make a fashion police citizen's arrest—many college kids seem to shop first and ask questions ("Does my thesis adviser really need to see my butt cleavage?") later. But for every clueless fashion victim, there's a budget-conscious student who can spin thrift-shop straw into sartorial gold. Those same penny-pinchers would never think of paying full price for books or music when the secondhand options are so college-town abundant.

Melting pot of old and new that it is, Boston caters to many tastes. Thrifty Yankees, filthy-rich foreign students, Brahmin snobs, and Cambridge multiculturalists all have their own haunts. What's more, diverse stores often share a neighborhood, making the real pleasure for Boston shoppers a (literally) pedestrian one. Take a walk down brownstone-lined Newbury Street, for example, and you'll find shops of all sorts—high- and low-brow, chain and boutique—and plenty of places to unload money on less durable favorites like ice cream and coffee. With the exception of Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston's great shopping districts haven't been homogenized into the equivalent of outdoor malls. You'll still see (figuratively) pedestrian aspects of city life like liquor stores, dry cleaners, and pharmacies, not to mention agencies that deal in the area's most sought-after commodity—apartments. Locals, tourists, and students blend easily in these areas, although if you feel the need to take your cell-phone shopping with you, you must head directly to the Armani Cafe with the rest of the Euro set. If you're in the mood for faceless suburban shopping, try one of the area's indoor malls.

What to Buy

Believe it or not, *Cheers* memorabilia still abounds, 20-some years after the fact. If you'd like something a tad more historically significant than a beer mug, seek out the gift shops at

Boston's museums. The **USS *Constitution* Museum gift shop** has prints of "Old Ironsides," for example, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum shop offers tasteful Venetian glass jewelry that Mrs. Gardner herself would approve of. The **Museum of Fine Arts** offers, among tons of other stuff, note cards, necklaces, and neckties based on museum collections (also available at two off-site branches). Boston is the big time for New England's countless artisans and craftspeople, and you'll see many unique handcrafted pieces, often at surprisingly reasonable prices. Beyond that, there isn't much that really says Boston, other than a parking ticket. The city has been around for close to 400 years, though, so antiques do good business. Thanks to the academic set, there's a vast trade in new and used books, music, and clothing. When it comes to clothes, though, don't expect to find great deals; designer boutiques rely on the deep pockets of international students. But their wares sometimes end up at Filene's Basement anyway, so the label-conscious have a second chance.

Target Zones

If you want to focus on just one area, head for Boston's best shopping district—the eight blocks of Newbury Street from the Public Garden to Massachusetts Avenue (Mass. Ave.). Lined with picturesque town houses, it has everything from Cartier to comic books. Newbury Street is a stronghold of art galleries and has a smorgasbord of restaurants, cafes, and ice cream parlors—and you can't get lost on it. There are T stations at both ends and in the middle, and the cross streets go in alphabetical order. Heading from Arlington Street to Mass. Ave., one block past Hereford, you start at the Ritz-Carlton (home of Chanel) and Burberry's, and end up at the **Virgin Megastore** and Urban Outfitters, with a lot of common and uncommon names in between. One block over is Boylston Street, a somewhat less picturesque shopping stronghold.

Harvard Square in Cambridge has more stores geared toward students, in a less easily navigated web of streets, but plenty of retail, not to mention traffic. "The Square" is also a top destination for bibliophiles. Its recession-proof real estate market has priced out many non-chain retailers—with the pleasant side effect that nearly every other neighborhood in Cambridge has at least a couple of worthwhile shops.

Most tourists in Downtown Crossing's pedestrian zone are headed straight for Filene's Basement, but there are also push-carts selling funky jewelry, cheap clothes, and ethnic food

among the teen fashion and traditional jewelry stores. Downtown Crossing is a major magnet for bargain shoppers—the quality may be suspect, but the latest trend isn't likely to be worth a big investment anyway. Faneuil Hall Marketplace, right on the Freedom Trail, draws hordes of tourists to its generic collection of shops, pushcarts, restaurants, and food vendors. It's more pleasant to window-shop at night, when the crowds thin out and musicians take the place of jugglers and other street performers.

Charles Street on Beacon Hill is the antique lover's dream. Dazzling and dusty artifacts fill storefronts from Beacon to Cambridge streets, with a few more shops around the corner on Chestnut and River streets. This area is also experiencing a boom in intriguing gift shops and boutiques. Head to the North End for imported Italian and European food; you'll spot stores on Hanover, Salem, and Prince streets, although they're outnumbered by the many cafes and restaurants.

As for malls, Copley Place is quite a tony one, with Neiman Marcus, Tiffany, and Gucci in residence. Across from Back Bay Station, it connects to the Shops at Prudential Center, part of an office and retail complex that includes Lord & Taylor and Saks Fifth Avenue (and the first Krispy Kreme Doughnuts in Boston proper). Copley Place is best for browsing on a cold or wet day. The CambridgeSide Galleria, across the river, by the Lechmere T station, is clean but not particularly high-end or unusual. After browsing, check out the paddleboats in the adjacent lagoon, where Charles Riverboat Company cruises depart. The Chestnut Hill Mall on Route 9 in suburban Brookline boasts a Filene's and a Bloomingdale's, among others, but is worth a special trip only if you're mall-deprived at home.

Bargain Hunting

Clothing deals can be summed up in four words: "the original Filene's Basement." It's important to distinguish the real one from the store's suburban incarnations, which pale in comparison. At the Downtown Crossing location, clothes, women's shoes, accessories, and housewares are culled from such high-falutin stores as Neiman Marcus, Henri Bendel, and Barneys New York, as well as less elegant retailers. All clothing and accessory price tags include a date, and the price drops precipitously as time passes. The Swedish fashion chain **H&M,** across the street, is the place to get trendy, designer-knockoff outfits

on the cheap. With the cash you save, spring for a pair of too-cute shoes at DSW (Designer Shoe Warehouse), diagonally across Washington Street. With nearly 50,000 pairs, some are bound to be hideous, but there are enough choices to satisfy even the serious shoe-aholic. Boston and Cambridge offer bargains on both new and used books. The Hub's academic population ensures a good supply of secondhand volumes. If you're looking for cheap antiques, skip Charles Street (though Upstairs Downstairs is worth checking out). You're more likely to sniff out a good buy at the **Cambridge Antique Market** in East Cambridge.

Hours of Business

Most stores, particularly those in the major shopping areas, are open daily. Hours usually are 10am to 6pm Monday through Saturday and noon to 6pm on Sunday, with many establishments staying open till 8pm on Wednesday or Thursday. Most art galleries close on Sunday, Monday, or both. In general, the smaller the store, the more idiosyncratic the schedule. Hours are often longer during the winter holidays. Call ahead if you're in doubt.

Sales Tax

The sales tax is a relatively low 5% and doesn't apply to items of clothing that cost less than $175 or to groceries. Only the amount above $175 is subject to the tax. So go ahead, go crazy for $174.99 or less.

The Lowdown

Shopping bags to show off... The best designer duds dance out of a **Filene's Basement** bag to the tune of "You'll never guess what I paid for this." The fancier bags that dot the lobbies of the Four Seasons and Ritz-Carlton hotels often come from stores only a short walk away. Out-of-towners may be impressed by jewelry legends like **Tiffany & Co.** and **Cartier,** but Bostonians know to buy their bijoux and wedding gifts from **Shreve, Crump & Low.** It sounds like a law firm, but "Shreve's" is the best place to shop for heirloom pearls or that sterling silver swan brooch you've always wanted. Another name you'll see only on the banks of the Charles is **Louis Boston,** a temple of high

fashion (men's and women's) that seeks out labels you won't see anywhere else in New England and prices them accordingly. Bostonians who equate service with discretion shop at **Alan Bilzerian,** where the trendy, expensive fashion includes private-label sweater collections designed by the proprietor's wife and daughter. Women can browse the Italian designer frocks (Moschino, Dolce & Gabbana) at nearby **Serenella.** Many big European names have their own boutiques. **Giorgio Armani Boutique** is the most haute in couture and price of the Italian designer's three Hub outlets. The relatively less expensive **Emporio Armani** is several blocks away, and youthful **A/X Armani Exchange** is in the chichi Copley Place mall, where **Gucci** also has a boutique. More daring Italian design, oozing with attitude, can be found at **Gianni Versace's Newbury Street** boutique. Opposite the Public Garden are two legendary French labels: **Chanel Boutique,** at the **Ritz-Carlton** on Newbury Street, and **Hermès of Paris,** in the if-you-have-to-ask-you-can't-afford-it **Heritage on the Garden** complex.

Clothes to make you feel young again... If ultra-low-rise pants, faux-vintage tees, and Hawaiian shirts speak to you, **Urban Outfitters** and **Allston Beat** do their best to keep abreast of street fashions. While the moderate prices attract college kids to Urban Outfitters, shoppers who lived through the '70s polyester craze may feel as if they're trapped in an expensive Salvation Army store. Independent Allston Beat is more adventurous—seek it out if you're in the market for vinyl or rubber with your polyester. The **Garment District** (a store, not a neighborhood) in Cambridge offers funky threads as well as budget recycled clothing, sold by the pound. For fancier young women, **Betsey Johnson** sells flimsy little dresses in fun colors for serious money. And who wouldn't feel adorably madcap in little **Kate Spade** sandals and a flower-bedecked handbag?

Clothes to make you feel grown-up... The conservative cut never goes out of style in Boston—hence the city's affinity for chains like **Brooks Brothers** for men and **Talbots** for women. The local heroes of this look are **Jos. A. Bank Clothiers** in Back Bay, where "corporate classic" rules. At **Ermenegildo Zegna** (on Newbury St. natch),

you'll find linen and cashmere pieces that look casual but not sloppy. If you need three new red-and-blue rep ties, look no further than **Cambridge's J. Press,** where you'll also find tweeds and fine wool coats for Ivy League tailgating. But if you're not an aspiring banker or country squire, don't despair. For women, **Looks,** a small but discriminating shop just outside Harvard Square, proves that it's possible to wear natural fibers with great style—no mean feat in Cambridge. The quiet, yet cutting-edge chic, habiliments (mostly by American designers) at **Jasmine Sola** are worth a look, too.

Clothes for non-grown-ups... Near Arlington Street, the **Oilily** boutique makes Gap Kids look like Kmart. The **Red Wagon,** on Beacon Hill, overflows with little outfits so sweet your teeth will hurt (as will your wallet).

Everything under one roof... Boston has two full-fledged department stores, **Filene's** and **Macy's,** which conveniently face each other at Downtown Crossing. (The former sits atop Filene's Basement, which has long been a separate entity.) Both are well stocked—the cosmetics department at Filene's is noteworthy—but if you have a good department store at home, there's no need to rush to either of these.

World-beat chic... Since the 1960s, imported Third World clothing, rugs, and crafts have provided cheap, colorful, vaguely political ways for college students to dress themselves and their dorm rooms. Particularly in the so-called People's Republic of Cambridge, where the sixties are practically yesterday, the trend shows no sign of slowing. **Serendipity** and **Nomad** troll the globe (Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Far East) for jewelry, crafts, clothes, and, at Nomad, home furnishings. Central Square's **Ten Thousand Villages** features gifts and home accessories created in Third World villages and sold under "fair trade" principles.

Well-heeled wares... The hottest women's shoes are at a chic little Beacon Hill boutique, **Moxie,** that also carries jewelry and oh-so-cute handbags. Nearby **Helen's Leather Shop** is the opposite of trendy—it carries Western boots

for men and women. For the perfect cordovan-leather men's club shoe, try **Allen Edmonds,** which also has women's shoes, at the Public Garden end of the Back Bay. In **John Fluevog's** world of ironic footwear on Newbury Street, look for variations on classics like the bowling shoe, at inflated prices. For sheer volume, **DSW** (Designer Shoe Warehouse) at Downtown Crossing knows no equal. With 42,000 pairs in 1,200 different styles, all at least 25% off, it's sure to have something that will turn your head (and perhaps your ankle—the selection of women's dress shoes gives no indication that Boston is a largely cobblestoned place).

Obscure objects of desire... **Black Ink,** on Beacon Hill and in Harvard Square, has a curious selection of rubber stamps made from old engravings (zeppelin, anyone?) and a huge, ever-changing stock of delightful gifts that you'll want to keep for yourself. **Joie de Vivre** and **Buckaroo's Mercantile,** both in Cambridge, feature whimsical items that you just can't do without—like a retro lunch box or a 3D greeting card. The **Lannan Ship Model Gallery,** open by appointment only, is for nautical obsessives whose tastes have grown way beyond balsa wood. It's near the waterfront, of course.

For bookworms... Bostonians are such avid readers—and students have to buy so many books—that national, regional, and local bookstores thrive while offering competitive prices. **Barnes & Noble,** which has several branches around town, also operates the massive **Boston University bookstore** and the Harvard and MIT bookstores, which go by "the Coop" (a vestige of their co-operative origins, but pronounced like a chicken château). Two Boston-area emporia have earned *Publishers Weekly*'s coveted bookstore-of-the-year designation. The **Harvard Book Store** carries new books upstairs, used and remaindered titles on the lower level. The staff at **Brookline Booksmith** is as impressive as the wide-ranging stock—pay attention to the personal recommendations. Here, too, used titles are downstairs. **WordsWorth,** also in Harvard Square, offers a huge selection and a modest discount on everything except textbooks.

For thirsty bookworms... Bostonians love to sample a book along with a drink and a nibble, and there are several spots where you can get your Lord Byron and your Earl Grey in one stop. In the Back Bay, **Trident Booksellers and Cafe** is the bohemian place to test-drive a book (new or used) while you wolf down an avocado-Havarti melt. Magazine and newspaper hounds can stock up at the landmark **Out of Town News** kiosk in Harvard Square and then head to a cafe. A huge **Borders** looms over Downtown Crossing; the cafe is to the left of the entrance.

For thrifty bookworms... Bostonians like to save money as much as they like to read, so used bookstores are big here. The **Brattle Book Shop,** on a dingy Downtown Crossing side street, is one revered source where you might find out-of-print books or obscure tomes on the annals of Boston or naval history. The **Harvard Book Store** and **Brookline Booksmith** also carry used titles. **Buck a Book,** which has a half-dozen area stores, sells current best-sellers, discounted remainders, gift wrap, children's items, and stray videos and cassettes. If you can't find something a friend will love, you usually can find something they'll hate, at a gag-gift price. (The name dates to the good old days when many books did cost a dollar.)

For baby bookworms... All the big stores have great kid-friendly children's sections, but the best of the bunch is **Curious George Goes to WordsWorth,** a stand-alone offshoot of the WordsWorth bookstore in Harvard Square. Lively and colorful, with a jungle motif, this store is a perfect rainy-day getaway.

For special-interest bookworms... Book specialists in Boston are as varied as the titles they carry; a few have special totemic value. The original **Globe Corner Bookstore,** also known as the Old Corner Bookstore, has closed, but the branch in Cambridge continues to stock maps and travel guides. **Cuttyhunk** (formerly We Think the World of You) mixes travel with gay and lesbian fare in the South End, heart of Boston's gay community. Across the river, Cambridge boasts **Kate's Mystery Books,** which specializes in—well, you know.

Those lips! Those eyes!... Traffic between Boston and New York surely dipped a little when **Sephora** opened in the Shops at Prudential Center and makeup fiends could give up road-tripping. The European cosmetics wonderland's local competitors include Beacon Hill's **Beauty Mark.** The little shop carries an impressive array of brands, many hard or impossible to find elsewhere in the Boston area.

Music meccas... Among local record chains, **Newbury Comics** is a landmark on the alternative-rock circuit. Of the area's used record and CD stores, **CD Spins** deserves special mention—it's a clean, well-lighted place, focusing on rock and dance music, with a sprinkling of everything else. Closer to Newbury Street than to Kenmore Square, **Orpheus** is a three-room circus of records, sheet music, and ephemera in classical, opera, and jazz. Vinyl purists will want to take the Red Line to **Cheapo Records** in Cambridge's Central Square, for used R&B and rock LPs. **Disc Diggers** in Somerville's Davis Square has the area's largest selection of used CDs. A shrine for audiophiles, **Cambridge SoundWorks** sells nationally regarded speaker systems and has a hip, unusually low-key staff.

Home beautiful... Whether your style is traditional or contemporary, you're sure to find something that fits in. Newbury Street's **Dona Flor** specializes in lovely ceramic tableware and bakeware handmade in France and Mexico. **Susan Sargent**'s signature is bright, lively colors, and her Newbury Street shop carries everything from paint to furniture. On Beacon Hill, **Linens on the Hill** is a nook for imported table, bed, and bath linens, with a smattering of decorative tchotchkes. Across the river in Cambridge, Kevin McPherson of **Mohr & McPherson** trolls the world for finds like antique Chinese wedding cabinets, Indian folk-art armoires (retrofitted for your TV and DVD player), and intricately carved Indonesian teak beds.

Art for art's sake... Priced out of neighborhood after newly trendy neighborhood, local artists work and live all over the area. Check ahead to see whether open studios are scheduled during your visit, or head to a gallery. The city's big names cluster on Newbury Street. Traditionalists go to

Vose Galleries of Boston, or to the **Copley Society of Boston** (a nonprofit named for Colonial Boston's favorite portraitist) for slightly more adventurous contemporary art. **Pucker Gallery** shows contemporary work that's not too far out, like sculpture, paintings, and prints, while the **Barbara Krakow Gallery** trades in ultra-hip minimalist and conceptual art: Even if you don't know anything about it, you get points just for showing up—kind of like taking the SAT. The centerpiece of the burgeoning South End scene is **Bernard Toale Gallery.**

Art for your sake... All the area museums have intriguing gift shops, even when they're squeezed into small spaces, like the one at the **Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum** (see the Diversions chapter). Outside of their lofty environs, you can find aesthetically redeeming yet functional handmade goods at several spots: **The Society of Arts and Crafts** (Boston is dreadfully into societies) showcases jewelry, ceramics, furniture, and crafty things made of fiber, glass, and wood, while the **Cambridge Artists' Cooperative** is a good bet for bowls, scarves, and clothing.

Precious old stuff... Antiques shops selling top items, usually at top prices, crowd Charles Street. It's worth a stroll no matter what your budget. Entering the serenely spare interior of **Judith Dowling Asian Art** is like visiting a rock garden, an appropriate setting for its museum-quality Japanese rarities. Much less expensive, and staunchly eclectic, is Charles Street's **Upstairs Downstairs Antiques** (actually downstairs), which sells furniture and decorative objects.

Funky old stuff... Charles Street tastefully nods to the 20th century at the appropriately named **Twentieth Century Ltd.,** which has elegant costume jewelry from the '20s and fantastic Art Deco artifacts. East Cambridge near Lechmere isn't as picturesque as Charles Street, but dusty warehouses like the **Cambridge Antique Market** have lower prices and everything from furniture to vintage clothing, not to mention free parking.

Kid stuff... Two of the city's best kids' toy stores are at **The Children's Museum** (see the Diversions chapter): The

Recycle Center upstairs sells creative junk and useful odds and ends, including spare chess and Monopoly pieces, dice, and drawing paper. The regular toy store downstairs stocks paints, musical instruments, puzzles, and enough creative stuff to keep your little ones busy for hours. The **Museum of Science** (see the Diversions chapter) has an even better store crammed with dinosaur kits, astronaut ice cream, microscopes, star charts, and the like. **Stellabella Toys,** in Cambridge, supplies kids of all ages with almost everything, from teething rings to craft supplies. No weapons, though—it's Cambridge. **The Red Wagon,** on Beacon Hill, is better known as a high-end clothing store but carries an excellent selection of toys.

Incredible edibles... You'll find specialty stores with cheese, candy, wines, and deli meats in the densely packed commercial blocks of the North End. Local cooks shop at **Salumeria Italiana** on Richmond Street. Not far away, **Dairy Fresh Candies** carries a mouthwatering assortment of sweets and a growing selection of savory gourmet items. Two other tempting gourmet shops are **Cardullo's** in Harvard Square and shoebox-sized **Savenor's** on Beacon Hill.

The sporting life... If you insist on dressing in style for the great outdoors, Newbury Street's **Patagonia** has the latest in mountain chic—at least it's well made. Serious runners gravitate to the **Bill Rodgers Running Center,** where they generally won't find their guru but they may get a good deal on shoes. In the "why didn't we think of that?" category is **Wild Women Outfitters** in Arlington, offering gutsy grrrl-gear. Think hip-waders with built-in curves, woman-size kayaks.... Two sisters run this shrine to sporty sisterhood.



The Index

Alan Bilzerian (p. 140) BACK BAY Au courant fashions for both sexes in a small, two-floor store.... *Tel 617/536-1001. 34 Newbury St. Arlington T stop.*

Allen Edmonds (p. 142) BACK BAY High-end men's shoes.... *Tel 617/247-3363. 36 Newbury St. Arlington T stop.*

Allston Beat (p. 140) BACK BAY A local study in street hip. Shiny miniskirts, studded necklaces, very big shoes.... *Tel 617/421-9555. 348 Newbury St. Hynes/ICA T stop.*

Barbara Krakow Gallery (p. 145) BACK BAY Minimalist and conceptual contemporary art gets a hip showcase.... *Tel 617/262-4490. 10 Newbury St. Arlington T stop. Closed Sun–Mon.*

Bernard Toale Gallery (p. 145) SOUTH END Contemporary works by big names and emerging artists.... *Tel 617/720-1555. 33 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop.*

Betsey Johnson (p. 140) BACK BAY A neon designer even when she's working in pastels, Betsey Johnson is the antithesis of the Boston preppie look.... *Tel 617/236-7072. 201 Newbury St. Copley T stop.*

Bill Rodgers Running Center (p. 146) DOWNTOWN A road-runners' must.... *Tel 617/723-5612. North Market, Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Government Center T stop.*

Black Ink (p. 142) BEACON HILL/CAMBRIDGE Go with a friend and take turns exclaiming over the regularly changing selection of desk accessories, gift books, retro toys, stuffed animals, cool rubber stamps, and much more.... *101 Charles St. Tel 617/723-3883.; Charles/MGH T stop. 5 Brattle St.: Tel 617/497-1221; Cambridge; Harvard T stop.*

The Brattle Book Shop (p. 143) DOWNTOWN CROSSING Used and rare books. A family-run business, established in 1825.... *Tel 617/542-0210. 9 West St. Park St. T stop.*

Brookline Booksmith (p. 142) BROOKLINE One of the best bookstores in the area, and even in the country. The small but selective used section is in the basement.... *Tel 617/566-6660. 279 Harvard St. Coolidge Corner T stop (Green Line C).*

Buck a Book (p. 143) CITYWIDE Four locations downtown.... *125 Tremont St.: Tel 617/357-1919; Park St. T stop. 42 Court St.: Tel 617/367-9419; Government Center T stop. 45 Franklin St.: Tel 617/357-6505; Downtown Crossing T stop. 230 Hanover St.: Tel 617/523-3905; Haymarket T stop.*

Buckaroo's Mercantile (p. 142) CAMBRIDGE For the Elvis refrigerator magnet, loud Hawaiian shirt, or nun-shaped candle that you didn't realize was missing from your life.... *Tel 617/492-5792. 1297 Cambridge St., Cambridge. Central T stop and 10-min. walk.*

Cambridge Antique Market (p. 139) CAMBRIDGE The 150 dealers fill four floors with furniture, art, china, jewelry, vintage clothing, and junk.... *Tel 617/868-9655. 201 Msgr. O'Brien Hwy., Cambridge. Lechmere T stop. Closed Mon.*

Cambridge Artists' Cooperative (p. 145) CAMBRIDGE Affordable housewares by local artisans.... *Tel 617/868-4434. 59A Church St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Cambridge SoundWorks (p. 144) CAMBRIDGE Henry Kloss designs speakers and systems.... *Tel 617/225-3900. CambridgeSide Galleria, Cambridge. Lechmere T stop.*

Cardullo's (p. 146) CAMBRIDGE Imported foods, mostly European, plus loads of candy and a deli counter.... *Tel 617/491-8888. 6 Brattle St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Cartier (p. 139) BACK BAY Jewelry, leather bags, scarves, clocks, and watches from the famous firm, with prices not nearly as understated as the elegance.... *Tel 617/262-3300. 40 Newbury St. Arlington T stop.*

CD Spins (p. 144) BACK BAY Cheap used compact discs (also some new but marked down) located conveniently near the Virgin Megastore and Newbury Comics.... *Tel 617/267-5955. 324*

Newbury St. Hynes/ICA T stop. Also at Downtown Crossing and in Harvard and Davis sqs.

Chanel Boutique (p. 140) BACK BAY Just add red lipstick, a cigarette, and a much younger man.... *Tel 617/859-0055. 5 Newbury St. (at the Ritz-Carlton, Boston). Arlington T stop.*

Cheapo Records (p. 144) CAMBRIDGE One of the last great bastions of vinyl. A long, narrow floor of used jazz, rock, soul, and R&B albums and singles.... *Tel 617/354-4455. 645 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge. Central T stop.*

Copley Society of Boston (p. 145) BACK BAY The oldest nonprofit art association in the nation sells contemporary art by New England artists (mostly) of varying renown.... *Tel 617/536-5049. 158 Newbury St. Copley T stop.*

Cuttyhunk (p. 143) SOUTH END Long known as We Think the World of You, this compact bookstore is a touchstone for the gay and lesbian community.... *Tel 617/547-5000. 540 Tremont St. Back Bay T stop.*

Dairy Fresh Candies (p. 146) NORTH END Imported (often Italian) and domestic sweets, baking necessities such as chunks of fine chocolate, and gourmet condiments crowd the shelves of this tiny candyland.... *Tel 617/742-2539 or 800/336-5536. 57 Salem St. Haymarket T stop.*

Disc Diggers (p. 144) SOMERVILLE The hip staff at this eclectic, well-stocked store sells used and new compact discs at low prices.... *Tel 617/776-7560. 401 Highland Ave., Somerville. Davis T stop.*

Dona Flor (p. 144) BACK BAY What the well-dressed table is wearing, from austere Parisian plates to riotously colored Mexican napkin rings.... *Tel 617/266-0720. 246 Newbury St. Copley or Hynes/ICA T stop.*

DSW Shoe Warehouse (p. 142) DOWNTOWN CROSSING Indulge your footwear fetish on two time-sucking levels.... *Tel 617/556-0052. 385 Washington St. Downtown Crossing T stop.*

Emporio Armani (p. 140) BACK BAY Yes, the sidewalk cafe patrons pretending to concentrate on their cellphone conversations are

checking out your outfit.... *Tel 617/262-7300. 210 Newbury St., Copley T stop.*

Ermenegildo Zegna (p. 140) BACK BAY Impeccably tailored men's suits. With a little time (and a lot of dough), they'll transform you from fashion frump to sartorially splendid.... *Tel 617/424-9300. 39 Newbury St. Arlington T stop.*

Filene's (p. 141) DOWNTOWN CROSSING The usual department store stock spreads across six floors, with an excellent perfume and cosmetics selection (including a Stila counter) at ground level.... *Washington St.; Tel 617/357-2100; 426; Downtown Crossing T stop. 100 Cambridge Side Place; Tel 617/621-3800; Cambridge; Lechmere T stop.*

Filene's Basement (p. 139) DOWNTOWN CROSSING Large overhead charts explain the famous progressive-discount system: Prices (already low) start dropping after 2 weeks. If you see something you like, snap it up, because it won't be there later—and non-buyer's remorse is a bitter, bitter pill.... *Tel 617/542-2011. 426 Washington St., Downtown Crossing T stop.*

The Garment District (p. 140) CAMBRIDGE Student types pick through the dollar-a-pound clothes, though you can also find trendy and practical new stuff.... *Tel 617/876-5230. 200 Broadway. Cambridge, Kendall/MIT T stop.*

Gianni Versace Boutique (p. 140) BACK BAY They supply the clothes; you supply the attitude. Snap up a little something for that martini date at the Bristol.... *Tel 617/536-8300. 12 Newbury St. Arlington T stop.*

Giorgio Armani Boutique (p. 140) BACK BAY The snob-appealiest of the designer's three Boston shops.... *Tel 617/267-3200. 22 Newbury St. Arlington T stop.*

Globe Corner Bookstore (p. 143) CAMBRIDGE A wanderlust-inspiring selection of travel books and maps.... *Tel 617/497-6277. 28 Church St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Gucci (p. 140) BACK BAY High-end luggage, leather goods, menswear, and women's clothing.... *Tel 617/247-3000. Copley Place, 100 Huntington Ave. Back Bay T stop.*

H&M (p. 138) DOWNTOWN CROSSING This Swedish import is nirvana for fashionistas on a budget—the clothes are inexpensive but not cheap. Guys' club clothes and kids' duds, too.... *Tel 617/482-7001. 350 Washington St. Downtown Crossing T stop.*

Harvard Book Store (p. 142) CAMBRIDGE A local and national favorite, with a robust selection.... *Tel 617/661-1515. 1256 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Helen's Leather Shop (p. 141) BEACON HILL Slick Western boots, belts, and motorcycle and bomber jackets.... *Tel 617/742-2077. 110 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop. Closed Tues.*

Hermès of Paris (p. 140) BACK BAY Men's and women's clothing, handbags, porcelain, blankets, fragrances, watches, and stationery.... *Tel 617/482-8707. 22 Arlington St. Arlington T stop. Closed Sun.*

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (p. 145) FENWAY See the Diversions chapter.

J. Press (p. 141) CAMBRIDGE The traditional clothier has spent over a century perfecting the traditional Ivy League look. The only other branches are in masters-of-the-universe hotspots New Haven, New York, and Washington.... *Tel 617/547-9886. 82 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Jasmine Sola (p. 141) BACK BAY/HARVARD SQUARE Chic tailored clothes and accessories for women.... *344 Newbury St.: Tel 617/867-4636.; Hynes/ICA T stop. 37A Brattle St.: Tel 617/354-6043; Cambridge; Harvard T stop (Also at Chestnut Hill Mall).*

John Fluevog Shoes (p. 142) BACK BAY Where footwear is an art form. Clear-plastic pumps, retro lace-up and go-go boots, made for walkin'.... *Tel 617/266-1079. 302 Newbury St. Hynes/ICA T stop.*

Joie de Vivre (p. 142) CAMBRIDGE Who knew kaleidoscopes could be fine art? Well, lots of people. Check them out before browsing the abundant quirky gift items that help Joie de Vivre live up to its name.... *Tel 617/864-8188. 1792 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Porter T stop.*

Jos. A. Bank Clothiers (p. 140) BACK BAY Where to dress for corporate warfare.... *Tel 617/536-5050. 399 Boylston St. Arlington T stop.*

Judith Dowling Asian Art (p. 145) BEACON HILL Japanese fine art, paintings, and sculpture from the 11th through the 19th centuries.... *Tel 617/523-5211. 133 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop.*

Kate's Mystery Books (p. 143) CAMBRIDGE A brain-teasing selection, plus author events.... *Tel 617/491-2660. 2211 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Davis or Porter T stop and 10-min. walk.*

Kate Spade (p. 140) BACK BAY Home of the ultimate handbag, available in all sorts of improbable materials. The shop also stocks Spade's ultra-girly shoes, accessories, and items for the home.... *Tel 617/262-2632. 117 Newbury St. Arlington T stop.*

Lannan Ship Model Gallery (p. 142) WATERFRONT If you build model ships, make an appointment or get a life. Otherwise, sneak a peek from the sidewalk.... *Tel 617/451-2650. 540 Atlantic Ave. South Station T stop.*

Linens on the Hill (p. 144) BEACON HILL This storefront is attractively stocked with imported bath, bed, table linens, and pretty objects that strike the owner's fancy.... *Tel 617/227-1255. 52 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop.*

Looks (p. 141) CAMBRIDGE Women's clothing, often in natural fibers, always in great taste. Add accessories and jewelry, also available here, and you may not need to go anywhere else.... *Tel 617/491-4251. 1607 Mass. Ave. Harvard T stop. Closed Sun.*

Louis Boston (p. 139) BACK BAY This 1862 brick landmark (a former museum) is Boston's top destination for pricey menswear. It also carries women's apparel and toiletries for both sexes and has a salon and a cafe.... *Tel 617/262-6100. 234 Berkeley St. Arlington T stop.*

Macy's (p. 141) DOWNTOWN CROSSING Everything from shoes to saucepans.... *Tel 617/357-3000. 450 Washington St. Downtown Crossing T stop.*

Mohr & McPherson (p. 144) CAMBRIDGE Pier One goes luxe at this Cambridge favorite. The owner travels the world to search out the best antique Eastern exotica for the home. Check ahead to see whether your visit coincides with a warehouse sale.... *290 Concord Ave: Tel 617/354-6662.; Cambridge; no T stop. 2 Cambridgepark Dr.: Tel 617/354-8400; Cambridge; Alewife T stop; closed Mon.*

Moxie (p. 141) BEACON HILL The latest, greatest women's shoes—pricey, but worth it.... *Tel 617/557-9991. 73 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop.*

Museum of Fine Arts (p. 137) FENWAY See the Diversions chapter.... *Copley Place: Tel 617/536-8818; Back Bay T stop. Faneuil Hall Marketplace: Tel 617/720-1266; Government Center T stop.*

Newbury Comics (p. 144) CITYWIDE Caters to the college market with frequent sales and an enormous gift selection.... *332 Newbury St.: Tel 617/236-4930; Hynes T stop. 1 Washington Mall: Tel 617/248-9992; State Street T stop. 36 JFK St.: Tel 617/491-0337; Cambridge; Harvard T stop.*

Nomad (p. 141) CAMBRIDGE Come here for Third World pants that look like wall hangings, plus actual wall hangings—Nomad stocks multicultural home furnishings along with clothing.... *Tel 617/497-6677. 1741 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge. Porter T stop.*

Oilily (p. 141) BACK BAY Kids' and women's fashions from the Continent in cheery fabrics and prints.... *Tel 617/247-2386. 32 Newbury St. Arlington T stop.*

Orpheus (p. 144) BACK BAY The formal name says it all: Orpheus Performing Arts Treasures. Records, sheet music, and ephemera of jazz, opera, and classical music. Also in stock are vintage vinyl, DVDs, autographs, and memorabilia.... *Tel 617/247-7200. 362 Commonwealth Ave. Kenmore T stop.*

Out of Town News (p. 143) CAMBRIDGE As the address notes, this is where you zero in on Harvard Sq. in all its ragtag, bustling glory. Newspapers and magazines from across the globe—though not as many as before the Internet took hold—on sale from 6am until midnight.... *Tel 617/354-7777. 0 Harvard Sq., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Patagonia (p. 146) BACK BAY Good-looking outdoor clothes and gear that you'd hate to get dirty (and, honestly, most people who shell out the bucks for this wilderness-chic wear don't). Rough-hewn beams give the store a ski-lodge look.... *Tel 617/424-1776. 346 Newbury St. Hynes/ICA T stop.*

Pucker Gallery (p. 145) BACK BAY Works by Israeli, American, and internationally known contemporary artists. The downstairs

gallery has a peaceful fountain.... *Tel 617/267-9743. 171 Newbury St. Copley T stop.*

The Red Wagon (p. 141) BEACON HILL Pricey clothes the young'uns will grow out of in a couple of weeks and toys they'll pass on to their own kids. The bulletin board makes this oversized shop a yuppie-mom community center.... *Tel 617/523-9402. 69 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop.*

Salumeria Italiana (p. 146) NORTH END A high-quality deli with an Italian staff that really knows its stuff and cheerfully offers advice. Come here for imported oils, meats, and cheeses, fresh artisan bread, a great selection of olives, and just about everything else you need for a memorable picnic.... *Tel 617/523-8743. 151 Richmond St. Haymarket T stop.*

Savenor's (p. 146) BEACON HILL In addition to an adventurous meat (think rattlesnake) and seafood counter, this specialty-food store has perfect produce and highfalutin ice creams and sorbets.... *Tel 617/723-6328. 160 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop.*

Sephora (p. 144) BACK BAY You could grow an extra head and still not be able to try every brand of cosmetics and skin care at this huge self-service store.... *Tel 617/723-6328. 160 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop.*

Serendipity (p. 141) CAMBRIDGE Global chic for women who get their makeup at The Body Shop. Owned by a married couple who search the globe for clothing, jewelry, and accessories.... *Tel 617/661-7143. 1312 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Serenella (p. 140) BACK BAY Airy women's boutique in the heart of Newbury St., featuring daring duds from Dolce & Gabbana and other European designers. The sleek, minimalist decor is a perfect match for the clothing.... *Tel 617/262-5568. 134 Newbury St. Copley T stop.*

Shreve, Crump & Low (p. 139) BACK BAY Two floors of jewelry, china, silver, porcelain, crystal, and other giftware. Beware of brides storming the registry.... *Tel 617/267-9100 (800/225-7088). 330 Boylston St. Arlington T stop.*

The Society of Arts and Crafts (p. 145) BACK BAY The shelves of this retail and exhibition space brim with jewelry and other artsy-craftsy goods. The shop features a different artist every month;

works tend toward the avant-garde.... *Tel 617/266-1810. 175 Newbury St. Copley T stop.*

Stellabella Toys (p. 146) CAMBRIDGE An exceptionally welcoming place with lots of room for kids to play and lots of advice for adults who need it.... *Tel 617/491-6290. 1360 Cambridge St., Cambridge. Central T stop and 10-min. walk.*

Susan Sargent (p. 144) BACK BAY Feather your nest in eye-popping colors assembled by a former studio artist with a unique take on home decor.... *Tel 617/262-2226. 132 Newbury St. Copley T stop.*

Ten Thousand Villages (p. 141) CAMBRIDGE The nonprofit shop (part of the international chain) carries a wide-ranging assortment of gifts and home accessories.... *Tel 617/876-2414. 694 Mass. Ave., Cambridge. Central T stop.*

Tiffany & Co. (p. 139) BACK BAY Though it's not quite the same as the New York mother ship (for that scale, head to Shreve's), Boston's outpost of the famed jeweler has all the requisite fine china, crystal, and silver. Still, no breakfast.... *Tel 617/353-0222. Copley Place, 100 Huntington Ave. Back Bay T stop.*

Trident Booksellers and Cafe (p. 143) BACK BAY As much a hangout as a bookstore, with a virtuous veggie menu and mellow staff. The free wireless Internet access and long hours (daily till midnight) will make you forget that you normally run screaming from crunchy-granola places like this.... *Tel 617/267-8688. 338 Newbury St. Hynes/ICA T stop.*

Twentieth Century Ltd. (p. 145) BEACON HILL A downstairs store that carries tasteful jewelry and decorative items from the 1900s to the 1980s.... *Tel 617/742-1031. 73 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop.*

Upstairs Downstairs Antiques (p. 145) BEACON HILL Antiques don't have time to gather dust here—maybe because the prices are always reasonable.... *Tel 617/367-1950. 93 Charles St. Charles/MGH T stop.*

Urban Outfitters (p. 140) BACK BAY/CAMBRIDGE If you want to dress like a teenager, fine—but the best bargains here are the funky household furnishings, often made from recycled or natural

materials.... *361 Newbury St.: Tel 617/236-0088; www.urbanoutfitters.com; Hynes/ICA T stop. 11 JFK St.: Tel 617/864-0070; Cambridge; Harvard T stop.*

USS *Constitution* Museum Gift Shop **(p. 137)** CHARLESTOWN T-shirts and refrigerator magnets are so overdone—a print of "Old Ironsides" makes a delightfully unusual souvenir.... *Tel 617/426-1812. Building 22, Boston National Historical Park, Charlestown Navy Yard. North Station T stop or ferry from Long Wharf (Aquarium T stop).*

Virgin Megastore **(p. 136)** BACK BAY See for yourself what all the fuss is about.... *Tel 617/896-0950. www.virginmega.com. Newbury St. Hynes/ICA T stop.*

Vose Galleries of Boston **(p. 145)** BACK BAY Classy 19th- and 20th-century American art, including Hudson River School paintings, is the raison d'être of this family-run Boston institution. The contemporary wing shows the work of living artists.... *Tel 617/536-6176. 238 Newbury St. Copley or Hynes/ICA T stop.*

Wild Women Outfitters **(p. 146)** ARLINGTON The largest selection of women's boots in the Boston area, plus great gear for grrrls who can bait their own hooks and aren't afraid to get dirty. We especially like the woman-proportioned kayaks.... *Tel 781/641-5776. 397 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington. No T stop.*

WordsWorth **(p. 142)** CAMBRIDGE Getting lost in the warrenlike store with tens of thousands of titles is half the experience; the other is getting a discount on everything except textbooks.... *Tel 617/354-5201. 30 Brattle St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*


NIGH

TLIFE

6

Basic Stuff

Boston nightclubs are rolling up their red carpets when other cities' are rolling theirs out—last call lights flicker at 1:45am. With less time to collect cover charges and hawk overpriced drinks, club impresarios work extra hard to make their dance floors the place to be. The target audience: college kids, grunge victims, and yuppies. From one week to the next, the hippest, most hyper scene will move—Hub night crawlers are nothing if not nomadic, though on any given night they'll probably visit only one hot spot.

For younger party hounds, the small window of opportunity means a frenzy in those dancing hours, an urgency to have fun before being shuffled out of the clubs at 2am. Then there's the scramble to get invited to the after-hours scene lurking in some loft apartments and alcohol-free clubs.

Getting to nightclubs in Boston is easy—it's getting home that often poses a problem, even if you've really only had a couple. Most of Boston's clubs are accessible by public transportation, but for some reason best known to city officials and cabbies' unions, the subway stops running around 12:45, with at least an hour left to drink and dance. On Friday and Saturday, Night Owl buses take up some of the slack—and make you feel as if Mom has extended your curfew to 2:30am and is waiting outside the junior high gym in her enormous yellow-and-white station wagon. There are also plenty of surly taxi drivers around after hours, and Boston is generally a safe city to walk in—even in the wee hours, if you observe the obvious precautions of taking well-lighted streets and someone with you. Mature barhoppers can expect to be back by midnight, since the elegant hotel lounges and rooms with a view that cater to them tend to close even earlier.

Remember, Boston is a college town, so most clubs suck up to the hordes of wealthy international students and baseball-cap-sporting fraternity brats (though many dress codes forbid the actual caps). But there are also some less frat-friendly nightspots devoted to drag queens, kink freaks, the idle rich, and jazz aficionados. Some dance clubs change their focus on a nightly basis to attract a rotating clientele, so call before you go to verify that a given night's theme is up your alley.

Liquor Laws & More Vice Regulation

The drinking age in the Bay State is 21, and most nightclubs employ burly bouncers to scrutinize IDs. Underage partiers

have a scant chance of sneaking in—unless, of course, they are part of the city's wealthy foreign-student royalty, who push hundred-dollar bills into the hands of doormen, causing them suddenly to read 21 on a passport that says 19. All established clubs strictly observe the 2am closing, although covert drinking often continues in Chinatown, where some restaurants stay open until 4am. It's illegal to smoke in Massachusetts workplaces, including bars and clubs. It's not illegal (yet) to torment the bouncer by blowing clouds of smoke and whining in concert with the other nicotine addicts cluttering the sidewalk.

Sources

To find out which nightclub is the right club, pick up the weekly *Boston Phoenix* or the *Boston Globe*'s Calendar section, both published on Thursday, or the *Boston Herald*'s Edge guide on Friday. The clubs run more detailed ads in the oh-so-hip *Phoenix,* while the *Globe* has brief listings as well as longer write-ups on a few clubs each week. The *Improper Bostonian* and the *Phoenix* spinoff *Stuff@Night* include copious nightlife listings and ads. Gay and lesbian travelers should look for a copy of *Bay Windows* (free in stores, 50¢ at newsstands) for more extensive, frank coverage of the same-sex circuit (both full- and part-time gay clubs); the *Phoenix* also covers the scene in a monthly One in Ten supplement.

The Lowdown

Where the Eurobrats play... You'll see them around town, perfectly coiffed, elegantly Armani'd, and armed with gold cards and short attention spans. They party every night of the week, making the rounds of all the right spots on all the right nights. "They" are the international students who have infiltrated Boston's nightclubs and upscale stores. Usually dubbed "Eurobrats" or "Eurotrash" by the natives, they have breathed new life into the Hub's clubs and have mapped out their own nightly club circuit.

Dress to the nines and hit the ATM before arriving at **Aria** or **Pravda 116,** showplaces for well-heeled Euros and Middle Eastern kids. Students coast in on Daddy's money to huddle at private tables sipping champagne and checking labels (is that an Armani?). DJs spin dance tunes, while girls and boys look for sugar daddies and hot mommas. A

chic crowd, slightly more down-to-earth, dances the night away at the **Roxy** on Tremont Street, which is predominantly multinational on Friday. Loads of gorgeous women and men dance at **Europa,** which attracts one of the liveliest mixed straight-and-gay crowds around. The three-floor multilounge club draws Boston's beautiful people. On Thursday, **Avalon** in Kenmore Square rivals the United Nations for its international crowd. On Sunday, **Trattoria Il Panino,** a five-story trattoria-cum-disco downtown, turns into Eurohaven, aka "Level." Usually, the crowd's just the city's Italian elite and executive Bostonians.

It books the best local bands and occasional national acts. Axis, on the Lansdowne Street strip, tries hard to be as cool as its counterparts but seems to attract MTV-obsessed college kids from middle America out on the town. Axis does have sexy servers and pectorally blessed doormen.

Loud and live... Through some confluence of art and commerce, two of the best rock clubs in the area are around the corner from each other in Cambridge's Central Square. Another is practically part of the Boston University campus. As a bonus, the students who dominate the audiences at all three can get entertainingly pretentious—at least until the music drowns them out. The **Middle East** complex has the best scene going, with live music in four rooms, including a restaurant/art gallery. It's crowded and, in every sense, hot. **T.T.The Bear's Place** is smaller and lower-profile. A casual, popular place that's been around for years, it makes a point of booking the area's most promising up-and-coming rock and alternative artists. The **Paradise Rock Club** is the real deal—just big enough to have good acoustics and just small enough for national and national-caliber acts to interact with enthusiastic crowds.

Lounge lizards... Hotel lounges are the best bet for the well-heeled older crowd that likes piano bars, jazz trios, and dry martinis. The **Bar at the Ritz-Carlton, Boston** is the granddaddy of this scene, with world-famous martinis and service so proper you may wonder when the changing of the guard starts. The Fairmont Copley Plaza's stately **Oak Bar** is a high-ceilinged, wood-paneled throwback to the days when private men's clubs were overtly the nexus of power (these days they're more discreet, if not less influential).

Other hotel lounges in which to luxuriate: the Regal Bostonian's airy **Atrium,** where on Saturdays a cabaret vocalist joins the nightly pianist; the clubby bar at the **Boston Harbor Hotel;** and the Onyx Hotel's plush, New York–style **Ruby Room.** (See the Accommodations chapter for hotel listings.) A sophisticated room with fabulous views, hushed conversation, and marked-up food and drink is the 52nd-floor **Top of the Hub** in the Prudential Center. It has a monopoly on the sky-high dining-and-dancing market; dust off your foxtrot before heading up.

If you see a shamrock, it's not a real Irish bar...

Boston is a city full of the Irish—need we mention the Kennedys? Scores of umpteenth-generation Bostonians with Irish surnames tattoo Notre Dame leprechauns on their bodies and sport shamrocks on their shirts. And there are dozens of Irish bars in the Boston area. But a definite distinction exists between the down-home Irish pub, where you'll hear brogues and drink Guinness, and the bars with a shamrock in the window, where wannabes swill Bud. All the authentic Irish bars look the same: dark-wood bars and booths, stained glass, Hibernian memorabilia. Only the crowd varies a little from pub to pub. **Mr. Dooley's Boston Tavern** and the **Green Dragon Tavern** are two Irish-run downtown pubs (read: tourists and business types) where Guinness and shepherd's pie are mainstays. Under the same management, these pubs feature Celtic bands crooning traditional ballads and employ an Irish staff. At the **Burren,** in Somerville's Davis Square, it can sometimes be hard to pick out an American accent. The **Druid,** a neighborhood bar, is the perfect place for a couple of black-and-tans and a chat with some young locals in Cambridge's Inman Square. Another great place for a Guinness, the **Brendan Behan Pub** in Jamaica Plain, attracts a diverse, young, arty crowd. **Doyle's,** also in Jamaica Plain (see the Dining chapter), draws politicians, families, and off-duty cops.

If you're curious about the dozens of tourist-oriented Irish bars around town, peek into the **Purple Shamrock** or the **Black Rose,** but be leery of fanny-pack-sporting tourists trying to do Irish jigs on the tables. Both clubs have Irish owners, but the Faneuil Hall crowds tend to be much less interested in whether the music is authentic (which it usually is) than in how much Guinness they can

hold. You're better off coming on a weeknight—or bearing in mind that Mr. Dooley's is 5 minutes away. Near North Station, the **Harp** might be great for a beer after a game at the FleetCenter—but not for a homey get-together with your mates. Loud, commercial music, throngs of sports fans, souvenir T-shirts for sale.... You get the idea.

The peanut butter cups of nightlife... And you thought black Republicans were weird. The Boston area is home to a number of Irish pub–slash–nightclubs. And no, that doesn't mean the patrons spontaneously start clogging. The **Phoenix Landing,** a Central Square stalwart, is a little spot that books big-name DJs; you'll find the starriest stars on Wednesday. Female-owned **River Gods,** just far enough from Central Square to feel like a destination, has excellent food (get there early) and a contemporary vibe—it's closer to the Ireland of today than to the set of a John Ford movie. The **Kells,** in Allston, packs in students and a good portion of the neighborhood's expat Irish community with mainstream dance music and good food. **An Tua Nua,** not far from Fenway Park, attracts a rowdy crowd to the back-room dance floor, especially on game nights.

Spin cities... Big, dark, and noisy, **Avalon** is the best dance club in Boston, demanding a hefty cover and turning away people at the door. Super DJs spin from 10pm to 2am; performers with names you'd recognize often take the stage in the early evening. Come often enough, or with a local celeb, and you may gain access to back-of-the-club VIP rooms (if that sort of thing matters to you). Friday night is "Avaland," with nationally celebrated DJs who draw a crowd so big it spills into **Axis,** next door. Axis draws the masses (usually dressed in black) for its Thursday dance parties, with house and progressive tunes. The high-tech **Vapor** dance club in the Theater District attracts top-notch DJs from around the country. Music runs the gamut from Latin to hip-hop. Nearby, the **Roxy** is a cavernous former hotel ballroom and a magnet for a chic 20- and 30ish crowd. It has balconies for scoping out before you swoop in and a regularly changing roster of theme nights (Latin, techno, and whatever's trendy enough to pack the house).

Sin cities... Boston's reputation precedes it. It's safe to say that the sex-club scene here, well, sucks. Some clubs try to

hold fetish nights and welcome the latex-bound to whip each other into a frenzy, but these nights are frequently dominated only by the pathetic. That's not to say there aren't Bostonians searching for debauchery; it's just that the lascivious keep themselves, and their sex lives, underground. The best place to find like-minded kinky fellows is in the *Boston Phoenix*'s pullout Variations section. There are hundreds of ads from spankers, hookers, couples, and the curious all looking for a memorable night of X-rated excitement. (*Bay Windows* also has fairly explicit personals for men seeking men and women seeking women.) One of the few clubs in town for S&M fiends and silk-panty worshippers is **Man-Ray,** in Cambridge. The crowd here is likely to consist of voluptuous hair stylists who have traded their white socks and sneakers for a leather bodysuit in hopes of a Friday-night tryst. Fetish fanatics and kinksters dream about Fridays at this club: Fantasy Factory (1st and 3rd Fri), Hell (2nd Fri), and Ooze (last Fri). (The other nights are kinky, too, but not devoted to bondage and domination.) The men here are no better—drooling pervs who line up to be whipped during the stage shows held hourly. The techno music at Man-Ray is some of the best in town, though, so it's worth a visit just to dance and crowd-watch. Wear black. One of the more authentic kink clubs is **Jacques Cabaret,** a two-floor bar in Boston's Theater District. It used to be a predominantly gay bar, but the downstairs lounge brings in live rock bands and mixed crowds. Upstairs, drag queens and female impersonators put on campy—often hilarious—shows. Here transvestites blend in so well with the fag hags that club goers with faulty gaydar might be fooled.

Peeling out... A onetime hotbed of burlesque, Boston today has hardly any strip joints—uh, "gentlemen's clubs." Once full of seedy sex shops and dirty-movie houses, the Combat Zone (between downtown and Chinatown) has virtually disappeared. A persistent presence (though it's a relative newcomer) is **Centerfolds,** a branch of a Providence lap-dance emporium in an increasingly residential—and increasingly hostile—neighborhood. No one quite knows what really happens in the back room at the **Ramrod,** where only leather-clad men (no, your shoes and belt don't count) are welcome. Judging by the whips and dog

collars adorning most of the visitors, it is probably something your Republican congressman would never do (in public). But the main bar has a diverse assortment of men, playing pool, chatting, or making eye contact with the local talent. During the summer, motorcycles line the curb, and their spike-wearing riders swagger into the unmarked doors. In the winter, the same crowd travels by cab.

College cheer... There are tens of thousands of college students in this intellectual mecca, and dozens of clubs that cater to them. Strangely, there's hardly any Cambridge college dance club scene—though the nightly live-music smorgasbord more than takes up the slack. Cambridge kids in the mood for recorded tunes and some intercollegiate fraternization grab a bite to eat in Harvard Square, then head to Boston hot spots. Across from Fenway Park near Kenmore Square, an entire street of nightclubs has cornered the college market. **Avalon,** one of the Lansdowne Street gang, can be a serious venue for live bands and top-notch performers (in the early evening, before the dance-club hordes descend). It's also a kids-night-out scene, especially on Saturday, when crowds of suburban big-hairs and perky sorority sisters mix with multicolor-haired cuties. **Axis** draws a younger crowd, in college and fresh out, except on Monday (gay night). **Bill's Bar** is the number one place to chill out on Lansdowne Street. The crowd is down-to-earth, the scene laid-back, and the staff upbeat. The tiny, booth-filled pub is also a magnet for up-and-coming rock bands; Sunday is reggae night. Boylston Street near Mass. Ave. is another student hangout. Patrons of **Dad's Beantown Diner** may look underage, but a bouncer explains their youthful glow by saying Dad's is where "the well-kept rich chicks go." Definitely a place for ostentatious American children of privilege, Dad's is packed all weekend. Decor is straight out of a retro diner: spinning soda fountain stools, neon, and chrome.

One-stop hopping... For the same sort of one-stop club hopping you find on Lansdowne Street in a much smaller area, try "The Alley" downtown, a strip of clubs along the pedestrian cul-de-sac at 1 Boylston Place. The **Big Easy** draws a friendly 20- to 30ish crowd that drinks and sinks in the overstuffed lounge chairs until it's ingested enough

liquid courage to hit the dance floor. True to its name, this club has a down-home casual atmosphere. Music runs the gamut from hip-hop and house to Top 40, with some live bands. For pure dance-club atmosphere, check out the **Sugar Shack,** downstairs. For rock and alternative and a much less earnest crowd scene, there's **Sweetwater Café,** proud of its bastard-of-the-Alley reputation.

Where the jocks flex their muscles... Professional sports players have to party, too, so they have carved out their own spots in town. **Daisy Buchanan's** is a Newbury Street basement-level bar where baseball and basketball players, and the occasional football giant, hang out in nondescript wooden booths, play pinball, and scarf up free hot dogs on weekends. Famous for its barroom brawls, Daisy's is still a popular haunt. Sports stars have been known to hang in the Theater District at Europa and the Roxy.

Where the jocks play... We're talking weekend warriors, barstool quarterbacks—your local joes and josies.... Monday Night Football is damn near a sacred holiday at the **Rack.** There's lots of whoopin' and hollerin', beer drinking, and contests during the weekly event. In between quarters, fans rush to one of the 22 Brunswick Gold Crown pool tables (thus the name) or take to the dance floor. **Redline** in Harvard Square is a three-headed monster—a restaurant and a dance floor that livens up in the late evening share space with one of the only bars in this yuppie-infested area where nursing a beer and hollering at the TV is considered good form.

As seen on TV... Starbucks notwithstanding, Bostonians tend to value local and unique over national-chain generic. That may account for the banishment of the local outlets of **Hooters** and **Coyote Ugly** to the same nondescript block, within shouting distance of North Station. At Hooters, scantily clad waitresses serve great chicken wings; Coyote Ugly's dominatrix hotties dance on the bar. **Whiskey Park,** part of the chic nightclub chain, is on the business end of the black-clad queue outside the Park Plaza on weekends.

All that jazz... National and local musicians prize the Boston area's savvy crowds even as they deplore oblivious types who consider their life's work classy background music. The real deal is cramped, crowded **Wally's Café.** In business since 1947, it features live jazz, cheap drinks, and no cover (1-drink minimum). Berklee students and instructors figure prominently, but check the bigger clubs' schedules for big names—who sometimes wind up here after playing elsewhere. The biggest names generally play one of two places. **Scullers,** in the DoubleTree Guest Suites, boasts that old-time favorites (think Bobby Short) have played, but its strong suit lies in the here and now. The club books rising locals and national stars for lively audiences. It competes for top talent with the elegant **Regattabar** in the Charles Hotel. **Ryles Jazz Club** in Inman Square is a perennial favorite. A weekly schedule (the club books jazz, blues, swing, and Latin) hangs outside near the entrance. Ryles serves barbecue nightly and is known for its Sunday jazz brunch (10am–3pm). The smallish **Wonder Bar** in Allston attracts a loyal following that comes to hear live jazz—both local and touring bands play. Finally, **Bob the Chef's Jazz Café** and **Les Zygomates** both offer jazz with excellent food (see the Dining chapter).

All that blues... The original House of Blues has closed, but demand remains high. Unlike the would-be hipsters who tend to inflict themselves on jazz venues, blues fans aren't worried about seeming cool (maybe because they just are). And they all know about **Harpers Ferry** in Allston, which looks like a neighborhood bar and sounds like almost nothing else in the Boston area. The **Cantab Lounge** in Cambridge's Central Square is a welcoming bar that schedules a wide variety of music but is best known for the stylings of the octogenarian Little Joe Cook and the Thrillers, "live and in color," who have headlined at the Cantab on and off for some 20 years.

Where the girls are... Boston's lesbian community makes do with generic gay clubs like **Club Cafe** or hits gay nights at clubs that skew straight the rest of the week. In fact, there are so many choices that no one's really complaining. Pretty girls come out and play on Friday at **Buzz** (known as Europa on straight nights). It's one of the premier dance

clubs for women. The Thursday night party is legendary at **Midway Café Dyke** in Jamaica Plain. DJs spin pop, disco, hip-hop, and more in this small, raucous bar. On a grim corner in Chinatown, the two-level **Ekco Lounge** turns into "Club Hollywood" on Saturday. The Amazon Poetry Slam takes place at the **Milky Way Lounge** on the last Saturday of every month and draws a large, loyal crowd.

Where the boys are... Gay clubs have the best dance floors in Boston—no ifs, ands, or buts. Plenty contend that **Machine** is the best gay club in Boston, attracting the hottest bods. Who's arguing? This large, throbbing crowd is always hot and steamy, and the wet and wild underwear and hot body contests are deliciously decadent. **Club Café** in the South End is part eatery, part nightclub, all gay. The upscale spot is a favorite for first dates, special occasions, and Thursday's kick-off-the-weekend scene. The biggest gay scene night is at **Avalon** in Kenmore Square on Sunday, which attracts so many outrageous divas that the dance floor sometimes extends into the club next door, Axis, for one giant gay dance party. Monday is gay night at Axis. Buzz, aka Europa on straight nights, draws big crowds to its two huge dance floors. On Thursday, Central Square's Man-Ray has "campus" night, which is rife with pretty boys and their manly, S&M-crazed counterparts. **The Eagle,** a dark, dank hangout for an older crowd on Tremont Street, is one of the friendliest spots for strangers—the bartenders welcome new faces and will introduce you to regulars. The best after-hours destination in town is **Rise,** a nominally private no-alcohol club that roars till sunrise on weekends.

Serious salsa... **Sophia's** in the Fenway can't be beat for its Miami-style Latin sound and salsa. The three-floor dance complex features live Latin and jazz entertainment on one floor, international tunes on the next, and a quieter rooftop lounge area. Order a pitcher of mojitos and a few tapas, and you'll be ready for the night.

Worth the trip... You'll have to ford the Charles to find genuinely eclectic clubs, but they're well worth the T fare. In Somerville's Davis Square, **Johnny D's Uptown Restaurant and Music Club** books just about anything (rock,

jazz, blues, folk, ska, you name it), and the cover rarely exceeds $10. The omnivorous bookings, tasty menu, and welcoming crowd make this a top pick for a full night out. The subterranean **Lizard Lounge,** in Cambridge, is a friendly place to explore the latest in local rock, pop, blues, rockabilly, and even poetry (on Sun). Steer clear of the reclaimed church pews—parts of your body you thought were always awake will fall asleep after about 10 minutes.

In the neighborhood... Boston has an inferiority complex about its clubs, and rightly so. Residents complain about the 2am curfew and the lack of truly wild nightlife. But there is one thing this area can boast about, and that's the abundance of great neighborhood bars. These spots are small—often too tiny to handle crowds—but some do welcome strangers. At the **DeLux Cafe** in the South End, Elvis busts and knickknacks from the sixties and seventies clutter the walls. The mixed crowd of rockers, yuppies, and barflies is always friendly. Across the South End, **Wally's** boasts one of the few integrated working-class crowds around. It's a hangout for both Berklee students and neighborhood old-timers, who squish themselves into the tight space to hear jazz. Across the river, the Druid in Cambridge and Johnny D's in Somerville are paragons of making visitors feel at home.

Clubbing al fresco... For smokers, every club in town has a patio—the sidewalk. **Tia's** is the "Brigadoon" of Boston's pickup joints. Open only in warm weather, it's tucked behind the Marriott Long Wharf, where lawyers and Financial District types don't even pretend to enjoy the view of the nearby harbor—the scene up close is far more eye-catching. The **Rattlesnake Bar and Grill** near the Public Garden has a long line of students and young office workers snaking out of it in summer, waiting to drink beer and maybe eat cheap Tex-Mex food on the roof deck or at the noisy, brightly colored bar.



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Paradise Rock Club (p. 162) KENMORE SQUARE AREA *Tel 617/562-8800. 967 Commonwealth Ave. Pleasant St. T stop (Green Line B).*

Pravda 116 (p. 161) THEATER DISTRICT A fashion-conscious see-and-be-seen crowd. You can think "Eurotrash," but don't say it out loud.... *Tel 617/482-7799. 116 Boylston St. Boylston T stop. Cover.*

The Purple Shamrock (p. 163) DOWNTOWN Cover bands play for crowds of tourists and suburbanites. And does it get any less

authentic: Tuesday is karaoke night.... *Tel 617/227-2060. 1 Union St. Government Center T stop. Cover.*

The Rack (p. 167) DOWNTOWN Pool tables, TV screens, a frantic patio scene, and lots of beer and rowdy fans.... *Tel 617/725-1051. 24 Clinton St. Government Center T stop.*

Ramrod (p. 165) FENWAY The bar for S&M leathermen.... *Tel 617/266-2986. 1254 Boylston St. Hynes/ICA or Kenmore T stop. No cover most nights.*

The Rattlesnake Bar and Grill (p. 170) BACK BAY A noisy, after-work Tex-Mex bar.... *Tel 617/859-7772. 382 Boylston St. Arlington T stop.*

Redline (p. 167) CAMBRIDGE One of the only bars in Harvard Square where Big Ten football players are as important as Ivy League mathletes..... *Tel 617/491-9851. 59 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Reggatabar (p. 168) CAMBRIDGE Hushed elegance and high-class jazz.... *Tel 617/661-5000. Charles Hotel, 1 Bennett St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Cover.*

Rise (p. 169) BACK BAY Hot DJs and hotter (male) patrons flock to this after-hours club on weekend mornings from 1:30–6am. Technically, it's private—make nice with a member and see what all the fuss is about.... *Tel 617/423-7473. www.riseclub.us. 306 Stuart St. Arlington T stop. Cover.*

The Roxy (p. 162) THEATER DISTRICT Come for the dancing, stay to ogle the celebs as they make their way to the VIP rooms.... *Tel 617/338-7699. Tremont Boston Hotel, 279 Tremont St. Boylston or New England Medical Center T stop. Cover.*

Ryles Jazz Club (p. 168) CAMBRIDGE This longtime favorite features contemporary acts and a Sunday jazz brunch. On any given night, you might find jazz, blues, world, or Latin sounds.... *Tel 617/876-9330. 212 Hampshire St., Cambridge. Central T stop and 10-min. walk. Cover.*

Scullers Jazz Club (p. 168) BRIGHTON Don't dismiss it just because it's in a chain hotel—this is a top spot for local and

national acts.... *Tel 617/562-4111. DoubleTree Guest Suites, 400 Soldiers Field Rd. Harvard or Central T stops, then a cab. Cover.*

Sophia's (p. 169) FENWAY This three-floor dance club overflows with salsa and merengue lovers. Live bands and lively DJs turn out hot and steamy Latin tunes.... *Tel 617/351-7001. 1270 Boylston St. Hynes/ICA or Kenmore T stop.*

Sugar Shack (p. 167) THEATER DISTRICT This nightspot packs 'em in for the best dance scene in "The Alley."... *Tel 617/351-2510. 1 Boylston Place. Boylston T stop.*

Sweetwater Café (p. 167) THEATER DISTRICT Tired of megasize, over-the-top, too-crowded, too-loud nightclubs? Sweetwater, in "The Alley," is one remedy. Live rock and alternative, usually acoustic, play most nights.... *Tel 617/351-2515. 3 Boylston Place. Boylston T stop.*

Tia's on the Waterfront (p. 170) DOWNTOWN *The* warm-weather, after-work destination for business and legal types. Men in suits, women in tank tops, hormones in overdrive.... *Tel 617/227-0828. 200 Atlantic Ave. Aquarium T stop.*

Top of the Hub (p. 163) BACK BAY The view from above, not the lite jazz, is the point here.... *Tel 617/536-1775. Prudential Center, 800 Boylston St. Prudential T stop.*

Trattoria Il Panino (p. 162) FINANCIAL DISTRICT Italian bistro, fine dining, and a dance club in one.... *Tel 617/338-1000. 295 Franklin St. State Street T stop. No cover.*

T.T.The Bear's Place (p. 162) CAMBRIDGE So what if the name sounds like a Saturday morning kids' show? This popular nightspot draws crowds looking for good, live music.... *Tel 617/492-0082. 10 Brookline St., Cambridge. Central Sq. T stop.*

Vapor (p. 164) THEATER DISTRICT A high-tech, high-energy nightspot that features some of the best DJs in town. Formerly a gay club, it retains a gay-friendly atmosphere.... *Tel 617/695-9500. 100 Warrenton St. Boylston or New England Medical T stop.*

Wally's Café (p. 168) SOUTH END Some of the best live jazz and blues in town, and one of the few bars to cross the town-gown

line—Berklee students mingle with laid-back locals.... *Tel 617/424-1408. 427 Massachusetts Ave. Massachusetts Ave. or Symphony T stop.*

Whiskey Park (p. 167) BACK BAY The VIP room is the place to be, but everyone can enjoy the restrooms—the stall doors are one-way mirrors.... *Tel 617/542-1482. Boston Park Plaza Hotel, 64 Arlington St. Arlington T stop.*

Wonder Bar (p. 168) ALLSTON A great little place in Allston for jazz aficionados. The music is live—some locals and some big names—and the scene friendly and cozy.... *Tel 617/351-2665. 186 Harvard Ave., Allston. Harvard Ave. T stop (Green Line B).*


ENTERTA

INMENT

7

Basic Stuff

There's a great scene in the movie *This Is Spinal Tap* when the manager of the heavy-metal band tells the hapless musicians they won't be playing Boston. Not to worry, he assures them: "It's not a big college town." The 50-plus institutions of higher learning in the area have long fueled a thriving rock scene. Not only has the Hub spawned such Stone Age hit-makers as Aerosmith, Boston, and the Cars—its indie scene also gave us the recently reunited underground demigods Mission of Burma and the now-disbanded Pixies and Mighty Mighty Bosstones. More recently, we have Boston to thank for Godsmack and Susan Tedeschi.

Boston's musical engine really runs on classical gas, thanks again to its schools of music and conservatories, and to Brahmin tradition, which has always sniffed at anything new—and savored anything cheap, like a free recital. Even if you have to pay for the experience, though, the acoustics and ambience of the city's concert halls ensure that you get your money's worth. And who can overlook the Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops? Fans of other musical genres—not just rock, but also jazz, blues, and folk—are equally loyal and numerous, meaning hopes for last-minute tickets are often dashed. Jazz scenes might have calcified in other cities, but the presence of the Berklee College of Music keeps Boston's relatively young. Blues and folk audiences tend to be out of college, although many have yet to realize it 20 years later.

With so much slavish devotion to music, duly reflected in local media, Boston's homegrown theater and dance scene have suffered somewhat by comparative neglect; drastic cuts in budgets for art funding haven't helped, nor has the (not entirely unfounded) attitude that New York City, 4 hours away, has siphoned off the best talent. Despite their lower profile, many of the artists who do make their living in Boston—at places like Boston Ballet, the Huntington Theatre Company, and the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge—are accomplished on a national scale and worth checking out, particularly if you can score half-price tickets. The **Boston Center for the Arts** in the South End is a burgeoning off-off-Broadway venue for adventurous and experimental drama where the tickets are usually cheap. And the Theater District lives up to its name, scheduling road shows and pre-Broadway touring tryouts of everything from *The Lion King* to *Rent,* and dance troupes from Martha Graham's to Bill T. Jones's.

Sources

The *Boston Globe*'s Thursday "Calendar" and Sunday "Arts" sections have extensive entertainment listings for Boston and beyond; the *Globe*'s Friday "Music" section offers Critics' Tips for the week ahead in classical, rock, jazz, and alternative rock. The *Boston Herald* provides less extensive but equally opinionated arts coverage; the Friday "Edge" section incorporates listings. The local contrarian weekly, the *Boston Phoenix*, published on Thursday, provides complete urban listings and more ads with concert announcements than the daily papers. Its website (www.bostonphoenix.com) features a great planning tool: The archives of back issues include spring and fall season-preview roundups that detail events, often long before venue and agency listings. WFNX (101.7 FM), the *Phoenix*'s radio station, is a good source of alternative rock concert updates. For theater, if you're curious about a show that's already been reviewed in the *Globe*, check the *Phoenix*'s convenient Play by Play summaries.

Getting Tickets

BosTix (Tel 617/482-BTIX; www.artsboston.org) offers same-day, half-price, cash-only tickets to performances of music, theater, dance, and opera; it also has information on, and advance tickets for other events, including sports. The BosTix kiosks are at Faneuil Hall (Tues–Sat 10am–6pm, Sun 11am–4pm) and Copley Square near Boylston and Dartmouth streets (Mon–Sat 10am–6pm,

How out-of-date is the "MTA" song?

The folk chestnut "MTA" (it was a big hit for the Kingston Trio) tells the sorry tale of a commuter condemned to "ride forever 'neath the streets of Boston" after the subway fare went up mid-trip. You may remember that he paid 10¢ to get on at Kendall Square, wanted to transfer to Jamaica Plain, but was a nickel short. So his wife came down to the Scollay Square station to hand him a sandwich every day.... Well, sorry, Charlie. These days a token costs $1.25, the MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) has morphed into the MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority), and seedy Scollay Square is long gone, torn down in the 1950s and '60s to create the architectural wasteland known as Government Center. Unlike commuters on many other big-city systems, T riders are still allowed to snack with abandon. But none of that answers the eternal question: If his wife could hand him a sandwich, why couldn't she hand him a nickel?

Sun 11am–4pm). They're also outlets for Ticketmaster (Tel 617/931-2000); despite hefty service charges, it's the best way to guarantee tickets to a concert because many box offices have limited hours or may not sell seats until the day of the show. Other agencies include NEXT Ticketing (Tel 617/423-NEXT; www.nextticketing.com) and Tele-charge (Tel 800/447-7400; www.telecharge.com). When desperate, try your hotel's concierge. Scalpers exist, of course, as they do everywhere. Check the classifieds in the *Globe* or the ads in the Yellow Pages under "Ticket Sales." If you do buy tickets from a scalper on-site, above all be discreet—one property owner may look the other way, another may bar the door.

The Lowdown

I hear a symphony... The **Boston Symphony Orchestra** tunes up and lets loose at—where else?—**Symphony Hall,** October through April. In May and June, the hall reverberates with the sound of the Boston Pops, who play a less-challenging repertoire of light classical and popular music. BSO tickets range from $26 to $95, but the sound is still exceptional in the cheaper second-balcony seats, where you sit underneath the Renaissance-style statues set in niches near the elaborately paneled ceiling. A limited number of these seats are also available as same-day rush tickets at the box office on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday for under $10. Be aware that subscribers have generally held the best seats for generations, but at least theirs won't be any more comfortable than yours.

Pops tickets, which often sell out weeks in advance, don't have rush discounts but are cheaper to start: $69 for tables and chairs near the front, down to the mid-teens for the second balcony. The Pops tradition of a week of free outdoor shows in summer, including its famous Fourth of July concert with fireworks, continues at the **Hatch Shell** on the Charles River Esplanade. The Pops' Independence Day crowd starts swarming that morning; if you're more into the music than the pyrotechnics, go to the rehearsal the evening of July 3. If you're more into fireworks, consider Memorial Drive on the Cambridge side of the Charles, where you have to watch the performance on a big screen but enjoy a spectacular view of the fireworks afterward.

The less-renowned Boston Philharmonic, conducted by Benjamin Zander, has the advantage of playing in the New England Conservatory's smaller but acoustically perfect **Jordan Hall,** a 1903 gem that underwent large-scale restoration in the late 1990s. Like Symphony Hall, it has a magnificent pipe organ at the rear of the stage. The Philharmonic also plays in the Gothic, dark-wood **Sanders Theatre** in Harvard University's Memorial Hall, another place that oozes tradition.

Chamber stars... The venerable Handel & Haydn Society, founded in 1815, performs instrumental and vocal works at **Symphony Hall,** as do chamber ensembles made up of BSO musicians. The FleetBoston Celebrity Series brings in star classical soloists, big-name touring ensembles, and sexy young violinists du jour. The well-respected Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra performs at **Sanders Theatre,** a charming Gothic Revival auditorium in Harvard's ornate Memorial Hall. Campus halls and museums are other hotbeds of moderately priced, high-quality music in attractive settings. In Cambridge you'll find Sanders, MIT's modern **Kresge Auditorium,** and the Longy School of Music's intimate **Pickman Recital Hall.** Popular Boston venues include the Museum of Fine Arts' **Remis Auditorium** and Boston University's **Tsai Performance Center,** with resident performers from the School of Fine Arts, as well as classical and pop bookings. A quintessential Boston tradition is weekend concerts in the rather somber Tapestry Room at the **Isabella Stewart Gardner mansion** (now a museum).

The line on choruses... Boston Cecilia has made its voices heard since 1875; it performs at Jordan Hall. Chorus Pro Musica performs with local orchestras at their regular venues and stages independent programs of new and established choral works directed by Jeffrey Rink. For an offbeat option, get yourself to **Emmanuel Church** in Back Bay on time: It presents a Bach cantata or another choral piece every Sunday.

What's opera, doc?... Boston seems to have an insatiable appetite for opera—a recent (free) performance of *Carmen*

on the Common drew hundreds of thousands of fans—yet supports only one major company and a handful of smaller competitors. The Boston Lyric Opera (617/542-4912; www.blo.org) performs three or four works between October and May at the **Shubert Theatre.**

In (rock) concert... If they're really big, they'll be at the **FleetCenter.** But artists and groups humble enough for 5,000 fans who don't need stage dives or mosh pits for inspiration often play the **FleetBoston Pavilion,** a beautiful white tent on the waterfront. Indoors, the less staid, 2,800-seat **Orpheum Theatre** has booked the Thrills, Sting, Sheryl Crow, and other acts, from an annual all-star comedy fund-raiser to the Buena Vista Social Club. The 1,400-seat **Berklee Performance Center** brings in top-flight jazz artists and world-music artists to edify students at the Berklee College of Music and to entertain the rest of us. Local radio stations often sponsor free rock shows in summer at the **Hatch Shell** and on City Hall Plaza; check the newspapers for announcements. On the more intimate and musically adventurous club front, a few players dominate. With a capacity of 1,500, cutting-edge **Avalon** is the biggest. The light and sound equipment is first-rate, but you'll still want to bring earplugs if you value your hearing. A balcony provides mosh-free viewing, and the long bars on the lower level are also safe hangouts. Tickets are sold here only on the day of the show; otherwise, use Next Ticketing. Down the Green Line in Boston University territory, the **Paradise Rock Club** is big on alternative acts and cult stars (for more on both clubs, see the Nightlife chapter).

Just plain folk... The ratio of folk singers to folk clubs is lopsided: **Club Passim** in Harvard Square is about it, but it's the big kahuna. Volunteers help operate the small alcohol-free club, with a nightly lineup of national, regional, and local folkies, plus poets and storytellers. The other major outlet for folk performers is the suburban or exurban coffeehouse; check the Calendar section of the *Globe* for listings.

Broadway babies... Boston is no longer the premier Broadway tryout town, but now and then a production still tests its wings in the Theater District (*Sly Fox* passed through in

2004 en route to New York). Productions headed to and from the Great White Way play on five stages: **The Colonial;** the newly restored **Opera House;** the Shubert, part of the **Wang Center for the Performing Arts;** the Wang Center's crown jewel, the vast Wang Theatre; and the smaller Wilbur Theatre. For Broadway and Broadway-caliber shows, prepare to pay $35 to $80 a seat; tickets frequently show up at BosTix.

High drama... A Boston standby, the Huntington Theatre Company is in residence at the slightly worn but still elegant **Boston University Theatre** near **Symphony Hall.** Nicholas Martin has infused the company with a new energy that extends to co-producing shows that play in the Theater District. The American Repertory Theatre, across the river at Harvard's **Loeb Drama Center,** is nationally known for its weird takes on classics and elaborate no-holds-barred designs. Both of these highly regarded companies frequently make half-price tickets available to BosTix—take advantage or pony up as much as $40 a seat. Or you can check out the Theater District's **Charles Playhouse,** an off-Broadway-size house that's home to the performance-art wild boys known as Blue Man Group and the audience-participation show *Shear Madness.* The smaller **Lyric Stage** in the Back Bay also offers good value for the money. Both also use BosTix.

The next stage... The **Boston Center for the Arts** in the South End is where you'll find the bold and the budget-minded among Boston's smaller companies performing in five venues: the 140-seat BCA Theatre, the 90-seat Black Box Theatre, the 40-seat Leland Center (a real hole in the wall), and new 200- and 350-seat spaces that opened in 2004. If you enjoy on-the-edge, experimental artists and performers, check out **Zeitgeist Gallery** in Cambridge.

Dinner and a show... The best entertainment deal in Boston might just be the **Commonwealth Shakespeare Company**'s performances on Boston Common in July and early August. One play per year benefits from top-flight direction, eye-popping set and lighting design, and quality actors (all professionals, about half Equity members). Pick up a picnic, bring a blanket or rent a chair, and if the play

isn't doing it for you, enjoy the people-watching and the spectacular sunset sky.

Men in tights... **Boston Ballet** produces a lavish, beloved *Nutcracker* at **the Opera House** (as of 2005) and more ambitious fare at the **Wang Center for the Performing Arts,** where big-name visiting companies also perform. Jose Mateo's Ballet Theatre of Boston, smaller but adventurous, plays the Sanctuary Theatre, 400 Harvard St., Cambridge.

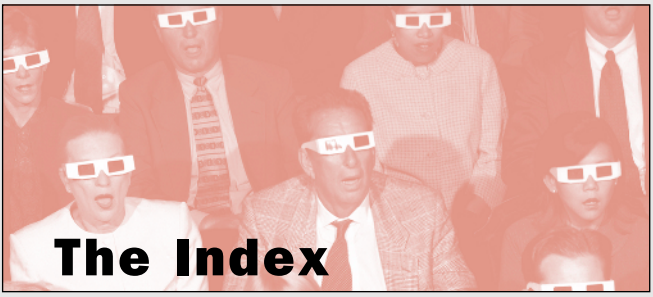
Comedy tonight... Well-known comedians such as Robert Smigel, Margaret Cho, and (very occasionally) Jerry Seinfeld come to the **Comedy Connection** in tourist central, aka Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Smaller names—but not smaller talents—put in their time at the **Comedy Studio** in Harvard Square, one of the best-regarded clubs in the Northeast despite being upstairs from a retro Chinese restaurant famed for its scorpion bowls.

The silver screen... Get your tickets early to avoid disappointment at the movies in Boston and Cambridge; there are a lot more cineasts than cinemas. On the Boston side of the river, you'll find foreign and independent films at the Museum of Fine Arts' **Remis Auditorium,** the logistically challenged **Loews Copley Place,** and (in T-accessible Brookline) the nonprofit, independent **Coolidge Corner Theater.** Cambridge has the excellent **Kendall Square Cinema,** the **Loews Harvard Square** multiplex, and the **Harvard Film Archive.** The restored landmark **Brattle Theatre** offers ever-changing double bills of art movies. For first-run megaplex fare, try **Loews Boston Common** or Harvard Square. In summer, the outdoor **Hatch Shell** has free movies on some Friday nights; bring something to sit on. Or luxuriate indoors at the **Wang Center for the Performing Arts,** which, in a nod to the theater's original function, offers a classic-film series. For movie listings, the best bet is the *Globe*.

Virtual playtime... **Jillian's Boston,** at the corner of low-rent, loud-music Lansdowne and Ipswich streets, used to be an upscale billiards club. Now it's a virtual-reality playroom for regressive adults, with high-tech simulations of

car racing and golf, video card games, arcade games, and plenty of pool tables. Also here are five bars, a restaurant, and a dance club. Children are allowed only before 8pm and must be accompanied by an adult.

The big game... The ultimate New England sports experience is watching the Red Sox play in the holy land of professional baseball, **Fenway Park.** The 2002 and 2004 NFL champions, the New England Patriots, play 45 minutes south of Boston at **Gillette Stadium** in Foxboro. The Celtics (basketball) and Bruins (hockey) rule the roost—though not their respective leagues—at the **FleetCenter,** a cookie-cutter arena that also books big-name concerts, ice shows, and the circus (in October). Fenway Park and the FleetCenter are on the T; you'll have to drive or take a special commuter train to Gillette Stadium.



The Index

Berklee Performance Center (p. 184) BACK BAY The world's best jazz, world-beat, and other artists show their chops here. Part of the Berklee College of Music.... *Tel 617/747-8890. www.berkleebpc.com. 136 Massachusetts Ave. Hynes/ICA T stop. Box office open 10am–6pm, closed Sun. Ticket prices vary.*

Boston Center for the Arts (p. 185) SOUTH END The newly expanded complex houses five theaters and the large-domed Cyclorama, built to house a circular mural.... *Tel 617/426-5000. www.bcaonline.org. 539 Tremont St. Back Bay T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Boston University Theatre (p. 185) FENWAY The 850-seat Greek Revival theater is a little worn, and the balcony (where BosTix seats tend to be) is steep, but for the highly regarded Huntington Theatre Company, it's home.... *Tel 617/266-0800. www.huntington.org. 264 Huntington Ave. Symphony T stop. No summer season. Ticket prices vary.*

Brattle Theatre (p. 186) CAMBRIDGE Opened in 1890, the theater became an art movie house in the 1950s and launched the *Casablanca* revival (Bogey's on a mural in the downstairs restaurant).... *Tel 617/876-6837 (recorded schedule), 617/876-6838 (office). www.brattlefilm.org. 40 Brattle St. Harvard T stop. Tickets $9.*

Charles Playhouse (p. 185) THEATER DISTRICT Downstairs, pile in to watch the tourist-luring murder-mystery farce *Shear Madness;* upstairs is the domain of the popular Blue Man Group.... *Tel 617/426-5225 (Shear Madness), 617/426-6912 (Blue Man Group). www.shearmadness.com. www.blueman.com. 74 Warrenton St. Boylston T stop. Tickets $34* (Shear Madness); *$46–$56 (Blue Man Group).*

Club Passim (p. 184) CAMBRIDGE The subterranean folk club is a local and international legend. It's small and always packed at showtime.... *Tel 617/492-7679. www.clubpassim.org. 47 Palmer St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Colonial Theatre (p. 185) THEATER DISTRICT Tucked into an office building, this 1,600-seat theater from 1900 features Broadway tryouts and touring shows.... *Tel 617/426-9366 (office); for tickets call Ticketmaster, 617/931-2787. www.broadwayinboston.com. 106 Boylston St. Boylston T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Comedy Connection (p. 186) DOWNTOWN Beantown's premier comedy venue—featuring comedians you've actually heard of—is on the second floor of Quincy Market, near Faneuil Hall.... *Tel 617/248-9700 (call for ticket prices). www.comedyconnection boston.com. Faneuil Hall Marketplace. Government Center T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

The Comedy Studio (p. 186) CAMBRIDGE An early look at the Next Big Thing may be in store—keep an eye out for network scouts monitoring promising unknowns and slumming headliners.... *Tel 617/661-6507. www.thecomedystudio.com. Hong Kong restaurant, 1236 Mass Ave., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Cover $7–$10.*

Commonwealth Shakespeare Company (p. 185) BEACON HILL/DOWNTOWN CROSSING The outdoor setting—smack in the middle of busy Boston Common—makes productions of the lighter plays come to life (and more serious fare seem a little less like homework).... *Tel 617/532-1212. www.commonwealth shakespeare.org. Boston Common. Park Street or Boylston T stop. Free admission.*

Coolidge Corner Theater (p. 186) BROOKLINE Two screens showing foreign and independent films; the schedule sometimes includes lectures, readings, and midnight cult movies.... *Tel 617/734-2500 (recorded schedule) or 617/734-2501 (office). www.coolidge.org. 290 Harvard St., Brookline. Coolidge Corner T stop. Tickets $7–$9.*

Emmanuel Church (p. 183) BACK BAY The Lindsey Memorial Chapel is a beautiful Gothic Revival setting for free musical events, including a Bach cantata every Sunday.... *Tel 617/536-3355. www.emmanuelmusic.org. 15 Newbury St. Arlington T stop.*

Fenway Park (p. 187) FENWAY Built in 1912, it's America's oldest and liveliest pro ballpark, beloved by the die-hard Red Sox fans. See this piece of baseball history while you can—the trade-off for the new owners' insistence on renovating rather than replacing the park is the introduction of seating sections where no fan has gone before (such as the top of the left-field wall).... *Tel 617/482-4769 (877/733-7699). www.redsox.com. 4 Yawkey Way. Kenmore or Fenway T stop. Tickets $12–$75.*

FleetBoston Pavilion (p. 184) SOUTH BOSTON WATERFRONT Great views of Boston under a billowy white tent make just about any pop concert here memorable.... *Tel 617/728-1600. www.fleetbostonpavilion.com. 290 Northern Ave., Wharf 8. South Station T stop. May–Sept. Ticket prices vary.*

FleetCenter (p. 187) NORTH STATION The air-conditioned replacement for Boston Garden. Home to the Bruins (hockey), the Celtics (basketball), and big-name music acts.... *Tel 617/624-1000 (recording). www.fleetcenter.com. 150 Causeway St. North Station T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Gillette Stadium (p. 187) FOXBORO The New England Patriots' popularity means regular-season football games sell out within minutes. In 2002 and 2004 they won the Super Bowl, making tickets virtually impossible to score—at least at face value.... *Tel 800/543-1776. www.patriots.com. Route 1, Foxboro; the MBTA (Tel 800/392-6100 outside Mass. or 617/222-3200; www.mbta.com) runs game-day trains. Ticket prices vary.*

Harvard Film Archive (p. 186) CAMBRIDGE The museum-like setting (Le Corbusier designed the building) gives film watching here an added intellectual air.... *Tel 617/495-4700. www.harvardfilmarchive.org. Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, 24 Quincy St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Hatch Shell (p. 182) BACK BAY This Art Deco treasure by the river schedules many free events besides the Boston Pops, including films and rock concerts. Bring something to sit on.... *Tel 617/523-8881. Charles River Esplanade. Arlington T stop. Mid-April to Oct. Free admission.*

Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum (p. 183) FENWAY The weekend chamber concerts in the Tapestry Room at this mansion-turned-museum are a quintessential Boston experience.... *Tel 617/734-1359 (recorded information). www.gardnermuseum.org. 280 The*

Fenway. Museum T stop. Late Sept to early May Sat–Sun 1:30pm. Tickets $20 (includes museum admission).

Jillian's Boston (p. 186) FENWAY Virtual-reality computer and video games for grown-up kids. Pay per game.... *Tel 617/437-0300. www.jilliansboston.com. 145 Ipswich St. Kenmore T stop.*

Jordan Hall (p. 183) FENWAY Home to the Boston Philharmonic and numerous student performances, this acoustically perfect hall also plays host to the Boston Cecilia chorus (Tel 617/232-4540).... *Tel 617/585-1122. www.newenglandconservatory.edu/jordanhall. 30 Gainsborough St. Symphony T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Kendall Square Cinema (p. 186) CAMBRIDGE The Boston area's best destination for first-run independent films has it all, including real butter on the popcorn. Turn on your poseur radar and loiter in the lobby.... *Tel 617/494-9800. www.landmarktheatres.com. 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge. Kendall/MIT T stop and 10-min. walk. Tickets $9.25.*

Kresge Auditorium (p. 183) CAMBRIDGE Eero Saarinen's dramatically designed MIT hall presents a range of concerts and performances, many of them free.... *Tel 617/253-3913 (reservations). 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge. Kendall/MIT T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Loeb Drama Center (p. 185) CAMBRIDGE This modern 556-seat main theater at Harvard houses the equally modern American Repertory Theatre and schedules student productions. Regardless of the performers' ages, expect the avant-garde.... *Tel 617/547-8300. www.amrep.org. 64 Brattle St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Loews Boston Common (p. 186) THEATER DISTRICT First-run blockbusters look and sound great in 19 theaters with stadium seating and state-of-the-art (i.e., earsplitting) audio. The cavernous complex feels like an airport terminal and even has a bar.... *Tel 617/423-3499. www.enjoytheshow.com. 175 Tremont St. Boylston T stop. Tickets $10.*

Loews Copley Place (p. 186) BACK BAY The former first-run complex in an upscale mall shows second-run, art, and indie films in theaters—some comically tiny—with wafer-thin walls....

Tel 617/266-1300 (recording). www.enjoytheshow.com. 100 Huntington Ave. Copley T stop. Tickets $9.

Loews Harvard Square (p. 186) CAMBRIDGE This cinema, a few steps from the T, shows a mix of commercial and art-house movies.... *Tel 617/864-4580. www.enjoytheshow.com. 10 Church St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Tickets $9.*

Lyric Stage (p. 185) BACK BAY On the second floor of the YWCA building, the resident company of this comfortable small theater is a reliable source of contemporary works.... *Tel 617/437-7172. www.lyricstage.com. 140 Clarendon St. Copley T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

The Opera House (p. 185) THEATER DISTRICT Freshly renovated to the condition it enjoyed in its 1920s heyday, the onetime vaudeville house has the best sightlines in town.... *Tel 617/880-2400. www.broadwayinboston.com. 539 Washington St. Boylston or Downtown Crossing T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Orpheum Theatre (p. 184) THEATER DISTRICT The faded glory of this 1852 theater with sagging seats is lost on most patrons of its many rock concerts. Phenomenal acoustics, no air-conditioning.... *Tel 617/679-0810. 1 Hamilton Place. Park St. T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Pickman Recital Hall (p. 183) CAMBRIDGE Avid classical-music fans head to Cambridge to enjoy free recitals in this intimate space with good acoustics.... *Tel 617/876-0956. Longy School of Music, 27 Garden St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop.*

Remis Auditorium (p. 183) FENWAY This hall in the Museum of Fine Arts' West Wing schedules frequent classical-music concerts, films, and lectures.... *Tel 617/369-3770. Museum of Fine Arts, 465 Huntington Ave. Museum T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Sanders Theatre (p. 183) CAMBRIDGE Concerts by the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra (Tel 617/661-7067), the Boston Philharmonic, student ensembles, and others in Harvard's Memorial Hall.... *Tel 617/496-2222. www.fas.harvard.edu/~memhall. 45 Quincy St., Cambridge. Harvard T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Shubert Theatre (p. 184) THEATER DISTRICT This historic theater, built in 1910, was recently renovated under the guardianship of

the nearby Wang Center. It is home to the Boston Lyric Opera.... *Tel 617/482-9393. www.broadwayinboston.com. 265 Tremont St. Boylston or New England Medical Center T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Symphony Hall (p. 182) FENWAY The Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Boston Pops split the year in this 2,625-seat hall that also books high-profile tours like the Vienna Boys Choir. The Handel & Haydn Society (Tel 617/266-3605; www.handeland haydn.org) also regularly performs here.... *Tel 617/266-1492 (information), 888/266-1200 outside eastern Mass. or 617/266-1200 (charge by phone). www.bso.org. 301 Massachusetts Ave. Symphony or Massachusetts Ave. T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Tsai Performance Center (p. 183) KENMORE SQUARE AREA Classical and pop performances at Boston University.... *Tel 617/353-8725. www.bu.edu. Boston University, 685 Commonwealth Ave. BU East T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Wang Center for the Performing Arts (p. 185) THEATER DISTRICT With 3,800 seats, the Wang is home to Boston Ballet's non–*Nutcracker* offerings (Tel 617/695-6955; www.boston ballet.org), touring companies, and a classic-film series.... *Tel 617/482-9393. www.wangcenter.org. 270 Tremont St. Boylston or New England Medical Center T stop. Ticket prices vary.*

Zeitgeist Gallery (p. 185) CAMBRIDGE At first glance, it seems to have put the "mental" in "experimental," but this performance and exhibition space has a nonjudgmental, all-inclusive philosophy that might win over even the most hardened cynics.... *Tel 617/567-6060. www.zeitgeist-gallery.org. 1353 Cambridge St., Inman Sq., Cambridge. Central T stop and 10-min. walk. Ticket prices vary.*



HOTLINES & OTHER BASICS

Airports... **Logan International Airport** (Tel 800/23-LOGAN; www.massport.com/logan) is the largest airport in New England. Served by 40 U.S. and foreign carriers, it is wrapping up a massive modernization program that reconfigured the access roads and built a new Terminal A from the ground up. The five terminals (A–E) all have taxi stands (fare to downtown hotels is $22–$25) and free airport buses. Buses 22 and 33 from the terminals stop at the subway (the T). The subway fare is $1.25, and you need a token. Take the Blue Line T inbound and you'll be downtown within 10 minutes. More scenic is the **Airport Water Shuttle** (Tel 617/222-6999; www.harborexpress.com), which runs every 20 minutes on weekdays (7am–8pm; 8am–6pm in the winter), every half-hour on weekends (10am–6pm), and crosses Boston's Inner Harbor to the city waterfront in 7 minutes. It costs $10. For the same fare, **City Water Taxi** (Tel 617/422-0392; www.citywatertaxi.com) connects about a dozen stops around the harbor, including the airport. It's an on-call service (phone when you get to the dock) that operates only from April to October. The free shuttle bus 66 connects the terminals with the

airport ferry dock. **Back Bay Coach** (Tel 888/BACK-BAY or 617/746-9909; www.backbaycoach.com) runs from the airport to downtown and many suburbs; fares start at $10 a head, and you'll need a reservation. For information on airport ground transportation, call 800/23-LOGAN.

Buses... The **MBTA,** or Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (Tel 800/392-6100 outside Mass. or 617/222-3200; www.mbta.com), runs buses as well as subways, commuter trains, and ferries. The local bus fare is 90¢; express routes to the suburbs cost $2.20 and up. To transfer to the T, request a ticket from the driver when boarding the bus; to transfer from the T to a bus, take a ticket from the machine near the platform turnstile when exiting the station. **Peter Pan Bus Lines** (Tel 800/343-9999; www.peterpanbus.com), **Bonanza Bus Lines** (Tel 888/751-8800; www.bonanzabus.com), and Greyhound (Tel 800/231-2222; www.greyhound.com), among other companies, provide regional and national service. South Station is the main bus terminal.

Car rentals... All the big guys are here, and a few little ones are as well. Call for locations: **Alamo** (Tel 617/561-4100, 800/327-9633; www.alamo.com), **Avis** (Tel 617/561-3500, 800/831-2847; www.avis.com), **Budget** (Tel 617/497-3669, 800/527-0700; www.budget.com), **Enterprise** (Tel 617/561-4488, 800/RENT-A-CAR; www.enterprise.com), **Hertz** (Tel 617/561-3000, 800/654-3131; www.hertz.com), **National** (Tel 617/569-7070, 888/868-6207; www.nationalcar.com), **Rent-A-Wreck** (Tel 617/254-9540; www.rentawreck.com), **Thrifty** (Tel 617/289-0002, 800/847-4389; www.thrifty.com).

Convention center... The enormous **Boston Convention & Exhibition Center** opened in South Boston in July 2004 (Tel 617/954-2400, 348 D St.; www.mccahome.com). Make sure you know how you'll get there because there's no lodging—the on-site hotel is under construction. **The Hynes Convention Center** in the Back Bay has ballrooms, meeting rooms, five exhibition halls, and an auditorium that seats 4,000 (Tel 617/954-2000, 900 Boylston St.; www.jbhynes.com).

Doctors and dentists... Your best bet for in-house emergency care is a referral from the front desk of your hotel. **Inn-House Doctor** (Tel 617/859-1776; www.inn-housedoctor.net) will bring pricey private health care (including pediatrics) into your Boston-area hotel room within 1 hour of your call, any time of the day or night. **The Beth Israel Deaconess Health Information Line** (Tel 800/667-5356 or 617/667-5356) is staffed by nurses who will give free medical advice and make doctor referrals. Many other hospitals list referral services in the Yellow Pages. For HIV-related information or referrals, contact the **AIDS Hotline** (Tel 800/590-2437), **AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts** (Tel 800/235-2331). For HIV testing and support, contact **Fenway Community Health Center** (Tel 617/267-0159). Inn-House also offers emergency dental care, as does the **New England Dental Center** (Tel 617/266-2700; www.newenglanddentalcenter.com). **The Massachusetts Dental Society** (Tel 800/342-8747 or 508/651-7511; www.massdental.org) can recommend a member.

Emergencies... **Police, fire, ambulance** (Tel 911), AAA (Tel 800/222-4357), **Poison Control** (Tel 800/682-9211), **Rape Crisis Center** (Tel 617/492-7273), **Rape Crisis Center Hotline** (Tel 877/627-7700), **State Police** (Tel 617/727-6780), **Travelers Aid International** (Tel 617/542-7286), U.S. Coast Guard (Tel 617/565-9200). **Hospitals with 24-hour emergency rooms include: Children's Hospital** (Tel 617/355-6611, 300 Longwood Ave.), **Massachusetts General Hospital** (Tel 617/726-2000, 55 Fruit St.), **Tufts–New England Medical Center** (Tel 617/636-5000, 750 Washington St.), and **Cambridge's Mount Auburn Hospital** (Tel 617/492-3500, 330 Mount Auburn St.).

Events hotlines... **Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau** info (Tel 888/733-2678 or 617/536-4100); citywide special-events information, City Hall (Tel 617/635-3911).

Ferries... The **Inner Harbor** ferries aren't just commuter transportation—they're the quickest and cheapest (just $1.50) sightseeing cruises around. You get a good look at the water and the skyline, but you're not trapped on a

lengthy excursion with other people's bored, seasick kids. The airport shuttle and several commuter boats also serve the downtown waterfront. You can also take a ferry to Cape Cod.

Festivals and special events...

JANUARY: **Martin Luther King Day** is celebrated with events citywide (Tel 617/635-4000).

FEBRUARY: **Black History Month** (Tel 617/742-5415) motivates numerous events around town. **Chinese New Year** (Tel 617/635-3485) is celebrated in Chinatown with a dragon parade and firecrackers.

MARCH: **St. Patrick's Day Parade,** South Boston (Tel 617/635-3911), when everybody's Irish (if just for a day) and hanging out on Broadway in Southie.

APRIL: **Red Sox Opening Day** (Tel 877/RED-SOX-9; www.redsox.com) renews the eternal optimism of the Fenway faithful; the Swan Boats return to the Public Garden (Tel 617/522-1966; www.swanboats.com); on **Patriots Day,** the third Monday of the month, the Boston Marathon (Tel 617/236-1652; www.bostonmarathon.org) takes over city streets and battle reenactments in full uniform take over Lexington (Tel 781/862-1450) and Concord (Tel 978/369-3120).

MAY: **Lilac Sunday** is at Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain (Tel 617/524-1717); on **Mother's Day,** the Ducklings Day Parade, a tribute to the children's book *Make Way for Ducklings,* marches through the Public Garden (Tel 617/635-3911); the **Boston Pops** launch their season (which runs through early July in Boston, through August at Tanglewood) at Symphony Hall (Tel 617/266-1492).

JUNE: **Boston Pride March** (Tel 617/262-9405) parades through town; on or around June 17, the **Bunker Hill Weekend and Parade** commemorates the Revolutionary War battle at Breed's Hill (Tel 617/635-3911).

JULY: **Boston Harborfest** (Tel 617/227-1528) wraps up with 4th of July celebrations after nearly a week of waterfront activities, including the **Boston Chowderfest** contest and the annual turnaround of the USS *Constitution;* **the Boston Pops concert** on the big day ends with glorious fireworks over the Hatch Shell on the Esplanade (Tel 617/266-1492, 888/4TH-POPS); the ***Boston Globe* Jazz & Blues Festival** includes a week of free and ticketed indoor and outdoor performances (Tel 617/267-4301).

AUGUST: The **Italian-American festival** season ends with the two biggest assemblages of carnival games and fried-dough stands: the **Fisherman's Feast** (Tel 617/248-0343) and the **Feast of St. Anthony** (www.saintanthonysfeast.com).

OCTOBER: **Head of the Charles Regatta,** Charles River, Cambridge (Tel 617/868-6200; www.hocr.org), is an enormous 2-day crew event that's only nominally about the racing.

NOVEMBER: **Thanksgiving celebrations** are commemorated at Plimoth Plantation (Tel 800/262-9356 or 508/746-1622; www.plimoth.org) and in the streets of Plymouth (Tel 800/USA-1620; www.visit-plymouth.com).

DECEMBER: **First Night on December 31** (Tel 617/542-1399; www.firstnight.org) has been the alcohol-free way to ring in the New Year since 1976. It's a day and night of citywide revelry with ice sculptures, art, dance, theater, kids' events, and a big parade. A special button sold around the city admits you to all performances; outdoor events are generally free (but lines can be long—dress warmly). It beats just getting drunk, although many First Nighters manage to work that in, too.

Gay and lesbian hotlines... **Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Helpline** (Tel 888/340-4528 or 617/267-9001), **Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth** (Tel 617/227-4313), **Fenway Community Health Center** (Tel 617/267-0900), **Bisexual Resource Center** (Tel 617/424-9595).

Newspapers... The ***Boston Globe*** is the fairly staid daily paper; the ***Boston Herald*** is the increasingly madcap daily tabloid. Check out the *Globe*'s Thursday "Calendar" section for extensive nightlife, concert, exhibition, and current events listings. The ***Boston Phoenix*** is a Friday weekly that focuses on arts, entertainment, and film and theater reviews. Published biweekly, the ***Improper Bostonian*** and ***Stuff@Night*** are free nightlife-oriented magazines with decent shopping and dining coverage. Check out the monthly ***Boston Parents' Paper*** (free from children's stores, libraries, and the like) for kid-related listings and activities. ***Bay Windows*** and ***in newsweekly*** are free weekly gay newspapers, both with comprehensive gay-oriented listings. ***Boston Magazine*** is a monthly with copious high-end ads.

Parking... Try not to drive to Boston and Cambridge, and if you have to, leave the car in the hotel garage and get around on foot, by public transit, and in cabs. You won't be sorry. If you must drive, arm yourself with a good map and a bad attitude. Metered parking is available throughout downtown Boston and Cambridge (usually 25¢ for 15 minutes, 1-hour limit), but finding a meter is another question. Before lunch, you can usually nab a spot at the 2-hour meters on the **Beacon Street side of the Public Garden.** The **far end of Newbury Street,** across Mass. Ave., is another possibility. **Memorial Drive, near MIT on the Cambridge side of the river opposite the Back Bay,** has no meters or time restrictions. Garages are generally expensive: Downtown rates are as much as $35 a day, Harvard Square lots are nearly as pricey, and cab fare from almost anywhere is cheaper than the hourly rate at many garages. Parking can add $20 or more per night to your hotel bill, but it's worth every penny. Wherever you sleep, eat, or shop, the best bet is to check out validated parking options and save yourself a fortune.

Pharmacies... In Cambridge, the **CVS** at Porter Square (Tel 617/876-5519) near the Porter Square T stop is open 24 hours; in Boston, the **Boylston Street CVS** (Tel 617/437-8414) is open till midnight. The **Walgreens** at 757 Gallivan Blvd., in Boston's Dorchester neighborhood (Tel 617/282-5246), is open 24 hours. Most emergency rooms can fill a prescription; most convenience stores stock a small, overpriced selection of toiletries and over-the-counter drugs; and most nightclubs have condom vending machines in the bathrooms.

Radio stations... Boston is one of the country's great radio towns. Try **WBZ** (1030 AM) for news and traffic, **WEEI** (590 AM) for sports talk, **WRKO** (680 AM) for talk and Red Sox games, **WGBH** (89.7 FM) and **WCRB** (102.5 FM) for classical music, **WFNX** (101.7 FM) for alternative rock, **WBUR** (90.9 FM) for **National Public Radio** and **BBC** programming, **WMJX** (106.7 FM) for soft rock, **WBCN** (104.1 FM) for rock, **WBOS** (92.9 FM) for album rock, and **WODS** (103.3 FM) for oldies.

Restrooms... The most pleasant Back Bay facilities are in the lobbies of the Marriott and the Westin in the Copley Place

complex. The toilets downstairs at the **Boston Public Library** in Copley Square are less plush but serviceable. Downtown, **Filene's** and **Macy's** have public restrooms. At **Faneuil Hall** you'll find bathrooms beneath and on the second level of Quincy Market, and you can slip into the Marriott Long Wharf (at the top of the lobby escalator, turn right). Before entering the freestanding kiosks scattered around downtown, which cost 25¢, check to make sure that IV-drug users haven't been camping out. **Harvard Square** is the worst place for the tiny-bladdered. There's a woefully overused facility on the second floor of the Harvard Coop (1400 Mass. Ave.); there's only one toilet per sex at **Au Bon Pain** (1350 Mass. Ave.), and it always has a long line outside. **Pizzeria Uno** (22 JFK St.) has a decent facility—but don't tell them we sent you.

Subways... The **T,** or **Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority** (Tel 800/392-6100 outside Mass. or 617/222-3200; www.mbta.com) is the oldest subway in the nation. It operates from around 5:30am weekdays (6am weekends) to 12:45am. The local fare is $1.25, climbing as high as $3 for longer distances; you need a token to enter the system, which you buy from a booth in the station. Tourist passes cover subways, buses, and Inner Harbor ferries but are a bargain only if you plan a *lot* of traveling. They're good for 1 day ($7.50), 3 days ($18), and 7 days ($35). The weekly combo pass includes trains and buses (but not ferries) and is good from Sunday to Saturday only. It costs $16.50. Passes are available at Visitor Information Centers on Boston Common and at the Prudential Center, some hotels, and centrally located stations, including the airport. The Night Owl bus ($1.50) runs until 2:30am on Friday and Saturday evenings. The MBTA commuter rail (the "Purple Line") runs 60 miles out of Boston to surrounding communities, connecting to the regular T at North Station, South Station, Porter Square, and Back Bay Station.

Taxes... Hotel room tax is 12.45% in Boston and Cambridge. Sales tax on all goods except food, clothing valued under $175, prescription drugs, and newspapers is 5%. Meal tax—on takeout, too—is 5%. A $10 surcharge on car rentals helps fund the city's new convention center (if you rent in Boston—dodge it by picking up your wheels in a suburb).

Taxis and limos... You'll find dozens of cab companies in the Yellow Pages and hundreds of cabs out cruising at busy times, like after last call. You can hail cabs on the street, head to the front of the queue at a cab stand, or call ahead; we like **ITOA** (Tel 617/426-8700), **Boston Cab** (Tel 617/262-2227), and, in Cambridge, **Ambassador Brattle** (Tel 617/492-1100). Boston cabbies are generally a friendly, trustworthy lot—and now that they've been through the mandatory charm school–type training that preceded the 2004 Democratic National Convention, the real misanthropes are better at hiding their true nature. The initial charge is $1.75, plus 30¢ for each ⅛ mile thereafter. There is a four-person maximum. Cabs from Logan into town cost $6.50 extra, including the $3 tunnel toll. Call the **Boston Police Department's Hackney Hotline** (Tel 617/536-8294) for info on specific services, complaints, and lost property. For limos and private cars, try **Carey Limousine** (Tel 617/623-8700, fax 617/628-9350), **Boston Coach** (Tel 800/672-7676; www.bostoncoach.com), or **Dav-El of Boston** (Tel 617/884-2600 or 800/343-2071 outside Mass., fax 617/884-2707; www.davel.com).

Telephones... The Boston area codes are 617 and 857. The 781 and 339 area codes cover nearby suburbs, 978 and 351 more distant communities north and west of town, and 508 and 774 the west and south, including Cape Cod; 413 covers most of Western Mass.

Tickets... You can buy day-of-show, half-price tickets to performing arts events in person only at the bright, poster-covered **BosTix** booths (Tel 617/482-2849; www.artsboston.org) in **Faneuil Hall Marketplace** and **Copley Square.** Cash only for same-day tickets; check the day's deals in person or online. The kiosks also serve as full-service ticket offices for theaters, museums, harbor cruises, trolley tours, sports events, and more. In Cambridge, **Out of Town Ticket Agency** (Tel 800/442-1854; www.outoftowntickets.com) in the Harvard Square T station also sells tickets to Boston shows and sporting events. **Ticketmaster** (Tel 617/931-2000; www.ticketmaster.com) takes orders online or over the phone and adds a hefty surcharge for the privilege.

Time... Call 617/637-8687.

Travelers with disabilities... Contact the **Boston Guild for the Hard of Hearing** (TTY 617/254-7300), the **State Office on Disability** (Tel/TTY 800/322-2020 or 617/727-7440), or **VSA Arts Massachusetts** (Tel 617/350-7713; TTY 617/350-6836; www.vsamass.org).

TV stations... Channel 2 is the local **PBS station,** Channel 4 is **CBS,** Channel 5 carries **ABC,** Channel 7 is the **NBC** affiliate, Channel 38 is the **UPN** station, and Channel 56 carries the **WB.** Most hotels have cable and pay-per-view movie channels.

Visitor information... The **Boston Common Information Center** is at **146 Tremont Street** at West Street, not far from the **Park Street T** stop. It's open Monday through Saturday from 8:30am to 5pm, Sunday 9am to 5pm. The **Prudential Information Center,** a kiosk in the **Prudential Center,** 800 Boylston St., is open weekdays 8:30am to 6pm, weekends 10am to 6pm. Both distribute countless brochures and maps and sell T passes and CityPasses. The **Greater Boston Convention and Visitors Bureau** (Tel 888/733-2678 or 617/536-4100; www.bostonusa.com) runs the centers and provides information through its automated phone system and voluminous website. The **Cambridge Discovery** kiosk at the **Harvard Square** entrance to the T also offers lots of maps, walking tours, and information.

Weather... Call **617/936-1234** for the weather forecast.

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